COMPARATIVE THEORIES AND METHODS I

Between Uniplexity and Multiplexity

RECEP ŞENTÜRK

IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY

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Recep Şentürk

IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
Istanbul

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PREFACE

This work is intended to be a textbook for the fundamentals of theories and methods in the social sciences and the humanities. Along with the knowledge of the existing theories and methods, this book will provide the analytical tools that will help the reader comprehend the hidden assumptions and philosophical underpinnings from a comparative and critical perspective. More precisely, this book aims to introduce not only theories and methods but also the worldviews from which they emerge and the paradigms that they are rooted in. Crystallizing the ontological, epistemological and methodological categories in mind, this book will also help the reader be consistent in research questions, methods and conclusions.

Social science is not just about randomly picking one among various theories and methods and applying them in research, if one aims at originality in thinking. For that purpose, this book aims to teach the reader the art of theory building in addition to offering a better understanding of the existing theories. Once one masters this art, it will be possible to start thinking about building one's own theory and eventually become intellectually independent. Indeed, our ultimate aim in writing this book is to enable the reader to achieve "intellectual independence." This book is good for students and readers alike who follow the Chinese proverb: Don't give me the fish but teach me to fish.

After long years of study and teaching in Istanbul, Cairo and New York, I felt the need for a book that would guide my students through the jungle of mixed theories in social studies which indeed is confusing and perplexing for many. For, while trying to understand a myriad of theories and methods which contained conflicting views and contradictory ideas I found out that the initiates cannot navigate in the ocean of social studies. My students are always amazed about the divergent theories scholars developed about the same phenomenon and the contradictory answers they offered to the same question. Every student finds studying theories with clashing ideas somewhat amusing and try earnestly to understand why they are different from each other and how they can make sense of them. I have also wondered why there are so many different scientific theories about the same issue. I would ask myself: Why do great thinkers disagree among themselves? If reality is one and if there is only one scientific method, then why is it that scientists have different, indeed opposite, opinions? Should not the scientific method and its application lead them to the same conclusions?

I am sure the same questions occupy your mind as well as the mind of every student and young researcher from every discipline in the humanities and the social sciences. But before addressing this issue, let me ask you a very fundamental question: do you know who classified your discipline as part of the social sciences or the humanities?

Let me share some of the insights I obtained during my educational journey. As I continued to progress further in my research, I discovered that even the conventional distinction between the social sciences and the humanities is a contested one among scholars for it is based on a particular theoretical approach to what science is and what it is not. I learned with great surprise that some scholars outright reject this distinction which I used to take for granted.

Furthermore, I have come across other classifications of the sciences including many that are very different from the one we commonly use today. For instance, the classification of the sciences by Ibn Khaldūn is very much unlike the one we adopt today in our schools and universities. If we had adopted Ibn Khaldūn's classification of the sciences and disciplines, we would have different names for the departments and schools in our universities. Eventually, I have also come to agree with the view of those scholars who focus on the question that they research and reject disciplinary boundaries.

I have always found studying theories to be intriguing and enjoyable especially because it provides a sense of awareness of the hidden assumptions and conceptual foundations behind the ideas you used to take for granted and the institutional practices you accepted without any questioning. This awareness helps you better analyze from a critical and comparative perspective the ideas presented to you as "scientific theories" and their applications in our lives. It is an undeniable fact that policy makers commonly use scientific theories to regulate our social, economic, political, educational and institutional life. For instance, the distinction I mentioned earlier between the social sciences and the humanities as well as the organizational structure of our current educational system which is based on this distinction comes from a particular theory, namely positivism, about what science is and how we can group sciences into different categories. According to positivism, disciplines such as literature and philosophy are not sciences because they do not use experimentation and observation and should therefore be placed under the category of the humanities. But why should we accept observation and experimentation as the only valid methods of science? And why should we use it as the only criterion to judge some disciplines as nonscientific?

This suffices to demonstrate that theories are not abstract entities void of any practical implications and applications. On the contrary, theories are very powerful tools and have an immense impact on our lives through the institutions with which we interact. This is why theories must be taken seriously.

And yet theories should not be treated as dogmas because they all have their limitations. All theories are products of human imagination similar to what we find in fiction and in stories. They are there as tools to help us understand reality or the subject we study. However, there is a disadvantage to this. Theories may, at the same time, condition our mind to think in a particular way or to focus on a particular dimension and, consequently, neglect some facts and other important dimensions of the subject we study. One must therefore be aware of the boundaries, limits and drawbacks of each theory.

Briefly put, there are two main rival theoretical imaginations and worldviews: "uniplex" and "multiplex". Uniplex means a single layer while multiplex means multiple layers. Some theories assume that reality has only a single layer, either material or ideal. In contrast, some theories see this dichotomy between materialism and idealism as a false-dichotomy and view reality as multiplex, which includes both material and non-material levels. This book exposes this deep cleavage in theoretical thinking and worldviews to help you better understand each one of them. Eventually, being aware of the philosophical assumptions behind theories regarding reality, knowledge and approach, we hope that you can both consciously choose between different existing theories and methods in consonance with your own attitude towards reality, and potentially build your own theory and method.

In this book we used labels such as positivists, idealists and materialists, constructivists and many others to classify and describe various relevant schools of thought in social sciences. We understand that it is hardly possible to find any scholars who label their own ontological, epistemological, methodological choices with any of these labels today. We label some currents of thought with these widely known terminologies because they exactly reflect and represent their underlying assumptions. Classification and reduction are inescapable in such an introductory book. First and foremost, our deliberate and thoughtful reduction has an analytical and pedagogical purpose. We preferred to reduce them under single umbrella terms such as these labels to communicate our message. We are aware of the fact that there are many nuances as well as palpable differences between these schools of thought; some scholars would even deny being labeled by any of these terms. Besides, it would be naive to assume the proponents of each view to disclose their hidden assumption with any of those labels, given the fact that those labels became the targets of criticisms from many different angles last few decades and they carry all the baggage of negative connotations. But the labels do a fair job to reflect their proponents' tacit commitments. Disclosure of these commitments in a critical perspective is the major aim of our book. Think of our preferred labels as ideal types, as common mental constructions, they do not conform exactly what actually they represent but they are deliberate simplifications and exaggerations. They help us to see reality in a more systematic and clearer way. It will be clearer what we mean by each label under the subsequent chapters where we discussed them separately.

The present book is divided into six modules covering thirteen chapters in addition to an introductory chapter. These thirteen chapters are covered in six separate modules with respect to the subject’s priority and relevance. For the reader’s convenience, we explained in the introduction the fundamental notions regarding theories and methods that are necessary for a self-sufficient understanding of this book —the definitions of fact, concept, thinking, idea, theory, method and methodology. The reader will also find a new classification of different theories and methods, as uniplex and multiplex, concerning primarily their assumptions about reality and knowledge that will be thoroughly explained in the following chapters. A more detailed structure of the book will be provided in the introduction.

***

It gives me great pleasure to present the first volume of this textbook on Comparative Theories and Methods: Between Uniplexity and Multiplexity. Let me briefly share with you the story behind it.

I have been personally working on the idea behind this book for more than twenty years in my articles and books. My first book on the subject was completed during my doctoral studies at Columbia University and published in 2015 entitled Modernization and Societal Sciences (Modernleşme ve Toplumbilim). It begins with a comparison between the paradigms of *Fiqh* and social sciences on how to study human action. In that book, I explored the causes and the process of transition in the Muslim world, particularly in Turkey and Egypt, from *fiqh* to Western social sciences, which made the Muslim world intellectually dependent on the West. The last book that I wrote from this comparative perspective is titled Open Civilization. In this book, I argued that "open science" is a prerequisite for "open civilization." By "open," I mean anti-reductionist and thus open to diversity of opinions and theoretical perspectives.

Despite my administrative responsibilities as a university president, last year (2018-2019) I took on the task of teaching the "Comparative Theories and Methods" course, which is one of the main core curriculum courses offered to freshmen students at Ibn Haldun University. As a first step, I formed an interdisciplinary group to work on the syllabus of that course. This group included professors Önder Küçükural, Alparslan Açıkgenç and Qayyim Naoki Yamamoto, along with graduate students who served as teaching fellows including Maria Taiai, Seda Özalkan, Danish Naeem, Metin Noorata, Ayaz Asadov, Cyrus McGoldrick, Evren Belkız, and İhsan Altıntaş.

We organized a week-long retreat at Enez in the city of Edirne, a summer youth camp on the Aegean Sea near the border with Greece, to finalize the syllabus and the course content. There, the idea of creating a DEF-TAB emerged. "DEF-TAB" is an abbreviation of two Turkish words: Defter (notebook) and Kitab (book). It contains the course syllabus, an academic calendar, lecture outlines, keywords, reading lists, visuals, and a glossary of the important concepts, students are required to know. There, in Enez, we also decided to name our group the "Istanbul Circle."

I offered the course with the contribution of the aforementioned professors and teaching fellows. We recorded the lectures and transcribed them from video to texts, collected student feedback from the discussion sessions, and decided to turn all the material that we have thus far prepared and compiled them into a textbook. Each member of the Istanbul Circle volunteered to work on the parts he or she is most familiar with.

To finalize our textbook, as the Istanbul Circle, we went to Enez again for a second retreat at the end of summer 2019. There, we reviewed all the work that we completed over the summer and discussed every idea and every sentence, one by one. Dr. Nursem Keskin Aksay from our Sociology Department along with our new teaching fellows including Leonard Faytre, Osman Kırkarlar and Ambreen Sultan joined our team and contributed to the editorial process of the book.

I am mentioning all of these things to demonstrate just how much work has been put in to produce this textbook and also to proudly acknowledge that this is a product of a collective work which was carried out over the past two years by members of our international and multidisciplinary team – the Istanbul Circle. Members of the Istanbul Circle have come from different countries and academic backgrounds and have all gathered around the idea of critically analyzing the existing theories and offering new alternatives based on "multiplexity." I thank each and every one of them for their fellowship and hard work in contributing to the production of the first edition of this textbook.

This project should be seen as a humble first attempt to produce a textbook from a non-Eurocentric perspective. We are aware that improvements will be made based on feedback from our readers, be they students or colleagues. Similar to other textbooks, revised editions will be produced in the upcoming years. Therefore, I greatly appreciate any input, feedback, critique and comments by students and colleagues alike.

I would like to conclude by thanking our staff at Ibn Haldun University, Tevhid Yeni who recorded the videos, and Savaş Tali who helped in printing. My special thanks to my tireless assistant Seda Özalkan whose meticulous and enthusiastic work has been crucial for the completion of this book in content and design. I would once again like to thank my young and senior colleagues from the Istanbul Circle who contributed to the production of this book with great enthusiasm, energy and sacrifice. I can proudly say that I am writing this preface on their behalf.

Recep Şentürk
Istanbul, 2020

INTRODUCTION

This book is a comparative and critical introduction to various major social theories and methods with an emphasis on the implicit assumptions upon which they are founded. It aims to go beyond the conventional theories and methods in social sciences that are colored with Eurocentrism. However, we do not intend for this book to be self-centered, either. Rather, it attempts to teach you not only the existing theories like other textbooks do but also the art of theory-building, which is vital for social sciences and, in fact, all sciences. Scientific knowledge progresses with theories, and we need a method that is suitable for this purpose. The concepts of theory and method for the social sciences are the main subject of this work. There is an intimate connection between social sciences and humanities. Therefore, the theories and methods you will learn in this book are relevant to both domains.

This book intends to enable students of social sciences to achieve "intellectual independence" by explaining how to:

- Critically and comparatively analyze existing theories and methods.
- Identify the origins of existing theories, methods, and ideas.
- Produce your own ideas.

Studies in each discipline are based on a theory, but the underlying assumptions behind the theories and methods are not usually exposed. This study will reveal the latent assumptions behind such social theories. Our aim is to enable you to better understand and critically analyze theories and methods in your discipline. Moreover, you will also be able to decipher the tacit assumptions and basic presuppositions lying at the foundation of any social theory. Finally, you will be able to build theories around principles that you choose consciously. The ultimate purpose of this kind of a study is to come up with original theories, which is only possible through critical and penetrating thinking.

1. Anatomy of Theory

A theory is like a body, in that a theory is a composition of parts. The smallest building blocks of a theory are "ideas" that are first built upon a concept, truth, or fact (depending on the theoretical school). Idealists begin with a concept (mental truth), while positivists begin with an observable fact (external truth). In contrast, the multiplex approach may begin with either. From a positivist perspective, if a theory is based on ideas that do not refer to any facts, then they are merely imaginary.

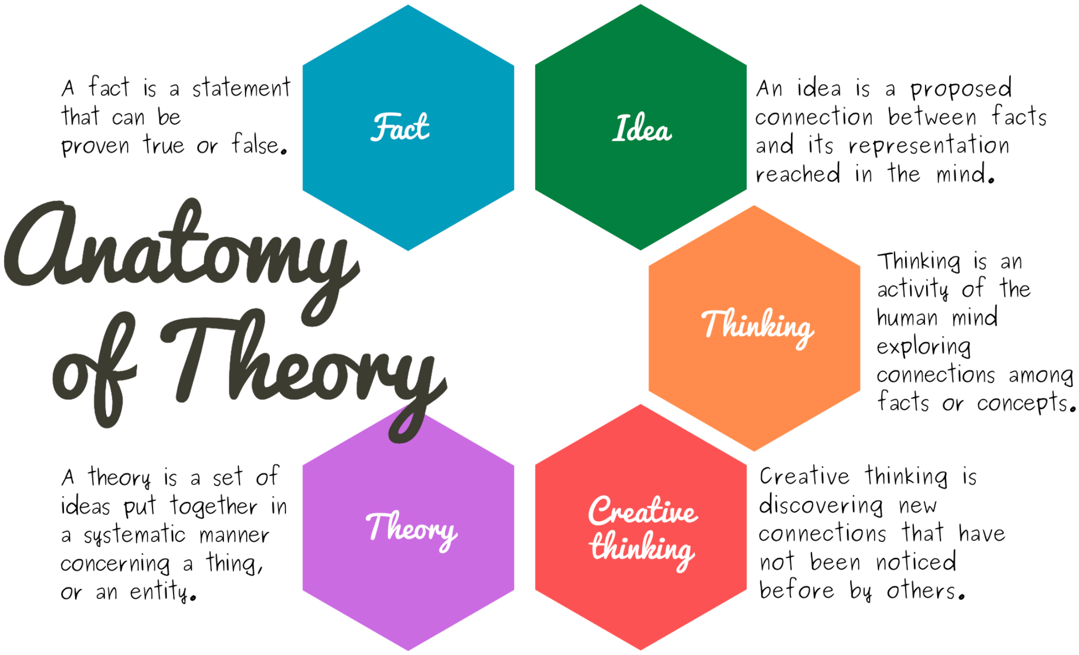

Anatomy of Theory
A fact is a statement that can be proven true or false.
Fact
Idea
An idea is a proposed connection between facts and its representation reached in the mind.
Thinking
Thinking is an activity of the human mind exploring connections among facts or concepts.
A theory is a set of ideas put together in a systematic manner concerning a thing, or an entity.
Theory
Creative thinking
Creative thinking is discovering new connections that have not been noticed before by others.

Figure 0.1: Anatomy of Theory

From an idealist perspective, theory construction begins with an idea in mind. Therefore, the starting point of a theory must be a certain fact about external reality or an idea about a mental reality. A simple idea is often used to mean a concept, but as it gets more complex, it then refers to a judgement or an argument, and an idea then becomes a proposed connection between facts or concepts.

Concepts versus Material Things*

Concepts are amazing things. They can do what no material thing in the universe can do. They can transcend space and time. No body can be in two places at the same time, but a concept can... Concepts have at least five characteristics that material things do not have. They are spiritual (or immaterial), abstract, universal, necessary, and unchanging.

1. Concepts are spiritual (immaterial, non-material). Compare the concept of an apple with an apple. The apple has size, weight, mass, color, kinetic energy, molecules, shape, and takes up space. The concept does not. It is "in" your mind, not your body. It is not in your brain, for your brain is part of your body. It has no size, so it cannot fit there. (If you say that it does have size, the size of an apple, then you must say that your brain must get as big as an elephant when you think of an elephant.) It has no weight, for when you stand on a scale and suddenly think the concept "tree," you do not gain the slightest amount of weight. In contrast to the concept "apple," the word "apple" is just as physical as an apple. It takes up space on the page, and it is made of molecules. The spoken word also is made of molecules: wave-vibrations of sound of a certain size and shape. But between these two material things — the apple and the word "apple" — there is the concept. That is the only reason why we can use the word "apple" to mean the physical apple we eat. We use one physical thing (the word "apple") as a symbol of another physical thing (the apple we eat), and that mental act, or mental relation, that we set up is not a third physical thing. It is a concept, and its meaning is the real apple even though its

being is not the being of an apple. (It is not in space, has no molecules, etc.) The concept's meaning is "a physical fruit that grows on apple trees, has red or green skin, etc.," but the concept's being is not physical (material), but spiritual (immaterial). Our having the concept of an apple is dependent on our having a physical body, of course: it is dependent both on the eye, which perceives the apple, and on the brain, which works whenever we have a concept. If we had never seen an apple, we would never have a concept of one, and if we had no brain we could not think the concept of an apple. But the concept is not just the physical apple or the visible word or even the sense image, which is somewhere between a physical and a spiritual thing. (We will see the difference between a concept and a sense image more clearly in the next few paragraphs.) The sense image is like a scouting report sent out by the intellect. The intellect is like a king who stays in a soul-castle and sends out scouts (the senses) to report to him What's going on in his kingdom. Or, to change the image, the intellect is like a paralytic in a wheelchair who directs a blind man where to push him. (In this image, the intellect is symbolized, paradoxically, by the physically sighted paralytic and the senses by the blind pusher.) The two are interdependent. When a thing is known, it acquires a second existence, a mental existence; the thing becomes a thought. If familiarity did not dull us, we would find this utterly remarkable, unparalleled in all the Lmiverse. No galaxy, no physical energy, no cell, no animal can do this; only a mind can give a thing a second life. Every language speaks of the human mind, or intellect, as doing something more than the (animal) senses do: as going "deeper" or "below the surface" or "penetrating" what is sensed, like an X-ray; as going beyond appearances to reality, beyond seeing to understanding. (Thus the irony in a blind poet or "seer" like Homer, John Milton, or Helen Keller "seeing" more than sighted people.) Only because we distinguish between appearance and reality do we ask questions. There would be no philosophy and no science without this distinction.

2. Concepts are abstract. The English word "abstract" comes from the Latin abstraho, "to draw (traho) from (ab(s))" or "to drag out of." Our mind extricates, or separates, something from something else. What is this something? When we form a concept, we abstract one aspect of a concrete thing from all its other aspects- e.g. the size of a flower (when we measure it), or its color (when we paint it). No one can physically or chemically separate the size from the color, or either one from the whole flower; but anyone can do it mentally. We can abstract, or mentally separate, adjectives from nouns. Animals simply perceive "green-grass," but even the most primitive men mentally distinguished the green from the grass; and this enabled them to imagine green skin, or red grass, even though they had never seen it. And once they imagined these things, they set about making them, e.g. by dying their skin green from the juice of grasses, or painting pictures of red grass with dye made from beet juice. (When he was two, my son made the thrilling discovery that he could make "purple doo-doo" by mixing up blue and red Play-Doh® in the shape of a hot dog.) Technology and art both flow from this human power of abstraction. The most important act of abstraction is the one by which we abstract the essential from the accidental. By having a concept we can focus on the essence and abstract from the accidents. Some people are reluctant to do this. Their conversation is utterly concrete — and utterly boring. You want to scream at them, "Come to the point!" These people have few friends, for to have friends you must learn to abstract, i.e. select, set apart, or pick out, the things that interest both them and you. Abstraction fosters friendship — a concrete payoff! Abstractions have received bad press in the modern world. Too bad. The next time you hear someone say "I'm a concrete, practical person, and I hate abstractions," remind them that babies are very concrete — and uncivilized. Abstract ideas do not move us as much as concrete things do. Intellectuals, who live with abstractions, are often practically ineffective dreamers and rarely "movers and shakers" of

men, because men will not usually live and die for abstractions that move only our mind — even stirring abstractions like "liberty, equality, fraternity" or "democracy" or "freedom" — but for concrete things that move their loves, like their families or their buddies next to them in the trenches.

3. Concepts are universal. Ask a child what he wants and he may answer, "Everything!" He has formed a universal concept. (Most concepts are only relatively universal, not absolutely universal like "everything" or "something" or "being.") E.g. "tree" is a universal concept because it is a concept of not only that one tree in your yard, but of all trees. "Beauty" is a universal concept, and when we judge whether San Francisco or Boston is more beautiful, we judge both cities by the universal concept "beauty" (or "beautiful city"). The literal meaning of "universal" is "one with respect to many" (unum versus alia). This means that a concept, while remaining one — one essence, one meaning — nevertheless is true of many things, predicable (sayable) of many things, applicable to many things. This oak and that oak and that maple are all "trees." We can truly apply the concept "tree" to any and every possible and actual tree that ever was, is, or will be. The concept signifies something common to many different things. This oak and that oak are different in size, and oaks and maples are different in shape of leaves and taste of sap, but all are trees. All share the same common essence, or essential nature. That is what we are seeking to know when we ask "What is that?" Only the concept gets at this one-in-many, this common essence in many different things. It is not in sense perception that we see this universal. We perceive only individual men and women, who are either tall or short, either old or young, but "human being" is neither male nor female, neither tall nor short, neither old nor young. "Human nature" does not look male or female, tall or short, old or young. It does not "look" at all; it "means." Appearances are particular; but essences, or meanings, or the natures of things, are universal. You cannot touch them or

feel them; you can only understand them. They are known by concepts.

4. Relations between concepts are necessary. Every tree necessarily has leaves; every triangle necessarily has three sides. A tree may or may not have many leaves, but it must have leaves. A triangle has three sides; that is dictated by its essence, which is grasped in the concept. Thus we can be certain of relations between concepts, as we cannot be certain of material things. We can be certain that a triangle will have 180 degrees in its three angles, but we cannot be certain how tall a tree will be. 5. Concepts are unchanging. Two plus two can never become other than four, but two bunnies plus two burmies can become more than four bunnies. The concept of "blue" can never become not-blue, but the blue sky can become not blue. The nature of a thing, which is known by a concept, is unchanging; but things, which are known by sense experience, are changing. Humans change; essential human nature does not.

5. Concepts are unchanging. Two plus two can never become other than four, but two bunnies plus two burmies can become more than four bunnies. The concept of "blue" can never become not-blue, but the blue sky can become not blue. The nature of a thing, which is known by a concept, is unchanging; but things, which are known by sense experience, are changing. Humans change; essential human nature does not."

* From Kreeft, Peter, and Dougherty, Trent. Socratic Logic. 2nd ed. South Bend, Ind: St. Augustine's Press, 2005, p. 36-39.

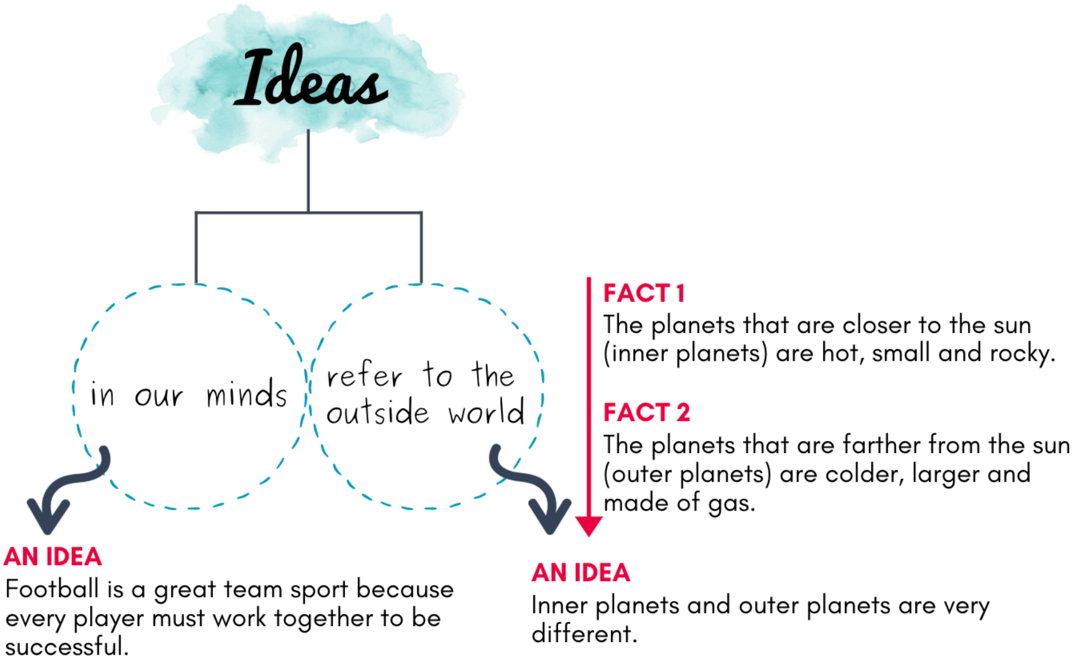
1.1. What is thinking?

The above process moving from facts or concepts to arguments is thinking which is basically exploring connections among facts. We are, however, more interested in creative thinking which is discovering connections that have not been noticed before by others. It is basically thinking which is based on research and development of ideas that help us construct theories.

1.2. What is a theory?

A theory is a set of ideas brought up together in a systematic manner. Usually we need to provide proofs for our theories. This means that a theory is a provisional idea concerning reality.

A formal understanding common in the natural and social sciences is that theory is a unified, systematic causal explanation of a diverse range of social phenomena. It is also commonplace, however, to speak of theory in a less formal way, that is, theory may be said to come in many shapes and sizes depending on levels of sophistication, organization, and comprehensiveness. At the simplest level, there are theoretical ideas or, more simply, concepts that function as analytical tools.



FACT 1
The planets that are closer to the sun (inner planets) are hot, small and rocky.

FACT 2
The planets that are farther from the sun (outer planets) are colder, larger and made of gas.

AN IDEA
Football is a great team sport because every player must work together to be successful.

AN IDEA
Inner planets and outer planets are very different.

Figure 0.2: What is an idea?

> "Theory is the necessary lens that we bring to our relationship to the world and thereby to make sense of its infinite manifold. Everyone necessarily possesses theory- understanding how the world works, linking cause and effect- but some specialize in its production. The practice of social science is becoming aware that theory is its precondition" (Burawoy, 2009,13).

1.3. Why do we need theories?

Theories are explanatory tools that help us understand phenomena and events. For example, the theory of gravity is developed to explain why things fall. When we come across a phenomenon whether in nature or in society we try to understand the nature of that phenomenon. After some research and observation; moreover, using other such scientific methods we reach certain conclusions. Then we try to express our conclusion in a formula that is relevant to the area of study. This expression is called "theory" which is expected to explain that phenomenon. We should be careful that a theory is a provisional idea concerning a certain problem. This means that a theory may be proved or disproved by more research. If it is proved it becomes a scientific discovery. But if it is disproved then it is rejected and used only in the history of its respective science.

In social sciences, it is not possible to prove theories conclusively or in fact there is no need for this because of constant changing in conditions of social phenomena. Therefore, these theories are also used to explain social phenomena in order to effectively deal with them or solve problems related to them. For example again social conflict theory aims to explain why we have conflicts between nations, classes, and groups. Therefore, we use this theory in order to deal with class conflicts or other related conflicts.

1.4. What are the limitations of using theories?

Adopting a theory while studying an issue makes people focus only on an explanation but may blind them to others. This may lead to:

- Reductionism
- Selective bias/elective affinity

1.5. Why do people come up with different theories to explain the same issue?

Let us address this question with an example regarding the role of religion in society. If you survey the literature about this issue you will find three opposite claims about it by the most prominent social scientists:

- Karl Marx states that religion is the opium of the people.
- Max Weber states that religion gives meaning to life.
- Durkheim states that religion brings order to society.

This may seem very confusing to you that great scholars have conflicting theories about the same phenomenon. This brings to mind how can you make sense of these divergent theories about the social reality we live in. The origin of different theories to the same issue lies in 'interconnected ontology, epistemology, and methodology', which constitute the foundation of social theory.

Different ontology leads to different epistemology which in turn leads to different methodology and as a result we get different theory(ies). This is because logically there are primarily three major questions that precede theory construction:

- The ontological question is 'what exists?'. Through this question you explore or rather you presuppose that the subject you inquire exists in a certain way;
- The epistemological question: Can we know what exists?
- The methodological question: How can we know what exists?

This book is based primarily on an investigation of these three questions and on how it is possible to build multiplex theories in social sciences based on this approach. After giving a brief explanation concerning the method in this introduction we shall proceed to the main subject matter of comparative theories and methods.

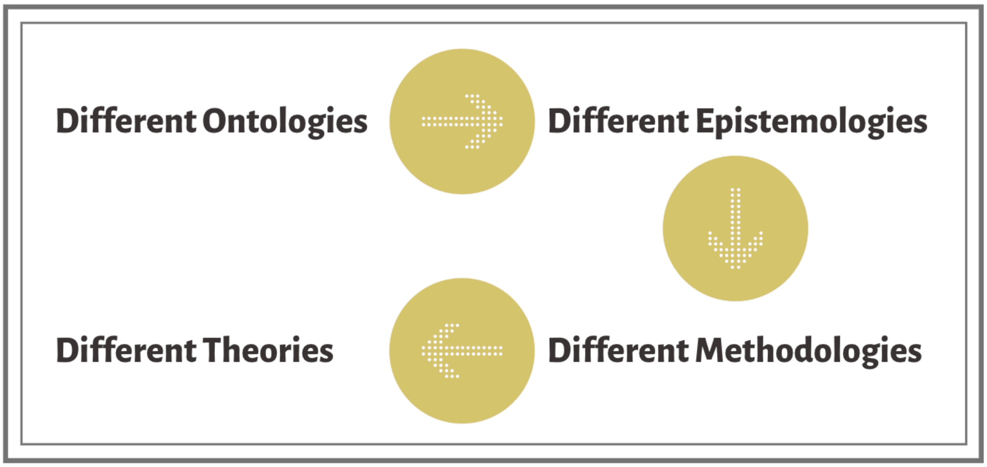


Figure 0.3: The relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and theory

1.6. What is method?

In a very general sense, a research method refers to the set of investigative procedures used within a particular field of study or discipline. This term encompasses a number of different connotations that are relevant to the practice of qualitative inquiry. In the everyday ordinary usage of the term in qualitative studies (and social inquiry more generally), method denotes a procedure, tool, or technique used by the inquirer to generate and analyze data.

Method is also conventionally understood in purely instrumental terms. In other words, as a tool, method contributes to the generation and growth of knowledge but is itself transparent or neutral, or at least the effects of a method on the object of understanding are determinable and controllable. The modern, Cartesian, or Enlightenment conception of method also assumes a subject-object dichotomy. It begins from the belief that we should separate the mmd (the subject, knower, consciousness) from the thing (that which is to be known, the object of consciousness). In this way of thinking, the function of method is to bracket bias or prejudice and keep the object of understanding at arm's length where it can be observed safely with disinterest and lack of involvement. Thus, it is not the subjectivity of the inquirer that produces knowledge but the method.

1.7. What is methodology?

When you need to do research you must be systematic and organized in your procedure. This is because scientific study is not like everyday learning of how to do things. Therefore, you need a roadmap so to speak. This road map is your method. But you should ask the all-important question: How can I develop my method? The discipline which is the proper field of inquiry into the problems related to method is "methodology" which is a theory of how inquiry should proceed. Methodology is concerned with developing a method which explicates the following issues:

- Outline the procedure to follow in investigation with clear principles and criteria;
- Identify the problems worth considering in this procedure to investigate;
- How to frame a problem in such a way that it can be investigated using particular designs and procedures;
- How to evaluate and explain the consequences of research;
- How to judge matters of generalizability;
- How to select or develop appropriate means of generating data;
- How to develop the logic linking problem-data generation-analysis.

2. How is originality of thinking achieved?

Isaac Newton once said: "If I have seen a little further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." This means that you need to know and understand the theories and ideas developed before you. This historical approach will place you on the shoulders of the giants. On the other hand, you should be aware of the fact that the giants can also commit errors. In that case, although Newton does not refer to this scientific attitude, you need to develop a critical approach in your research about the theories of others, as well as a self-critical approach about your own ideas.

A critical approach will also help you to check the validity of all theories in the diverse contexts in which they are applied, because logical coherence of a theory alone is not sufficient to apply it in any context. Sometimes a theory may be valid in one context but applicable in another. If a social scientist tries to do so, it would end up forcing a context-specific theory upon others.

We call this "self-centrism," which is to be avoided in the social sciences and humanities. Today in the global study of societies, many Western and non-Western scholars, consciously or unconsciously, try to force a perspective known as "Euro-centrism" upon all societies in the world. This is why many social scientists are trying to find alternative and comprehensive approaches to social theory and to come up with fresh theories that are not self-centered.

In order to rigorously evaluate these approaches from a comparative perspec-tive, you need to understand how a theory is constructed and used in social re-search.

3. How should we approach the diversity of ideas, theories, and methods?

There are three major academic approaches that attempt to understand and explain reality:

3.1. Modernist Approach: Unity

This approach is based on a monist worldview which makes no distinction between the natural and social world. This outlook therefore uses the same method(s) to explain social and natural reality. It has two major advantages:

- It is simple to learn and apply.
- It has clear rules and standards.

But it also has the following limitations:

- It does injustice to multi-layered reality.
- It overlooks the difference between nature and society.

3.2. Postmodernist Approach: Multiplicity

This is the approach with a multiplicity of methods that operate at the same level of reality (the material level) through horizontal relations. Each method is accepted to be relatively true and therefore excludes the possibility of absolute truth. Because it sees everything as relative, it may be called "absolute relativism." Like all other theoretical approaches, multiplicity also has its advan-tages and limitations. Two of its advantages are:

- Tolerance for ideas that have been marginalized or rejected.
- Freedom of expression.

Two of its limitations are:

- Loss of a sense of absolute truth, ushering what is now called the "post-truth" period.
- Plurality founded on competition. Alternatives compete with one anot-her and aim, sooner or later, to obliterate the other.

3.3. Holistic Approach: Multiplexity

The key word to introduce the holistic approach is "multiplexity," which recognizes that reality has multiple layers and cannot be reduced to a single layer. As such, it is a comprehensive approach that recognizes each layer of reality, including physical and metaphysical, material and ideal.

In the Islamic tradition, it is known as *marâtib al-wujūd*, which includes three major levels of reality:

1. The physical or visible realm (*mulk*),
2. The ideal or invisible realm (*malakūt*),
3. The divine realm (*lāhūt*).

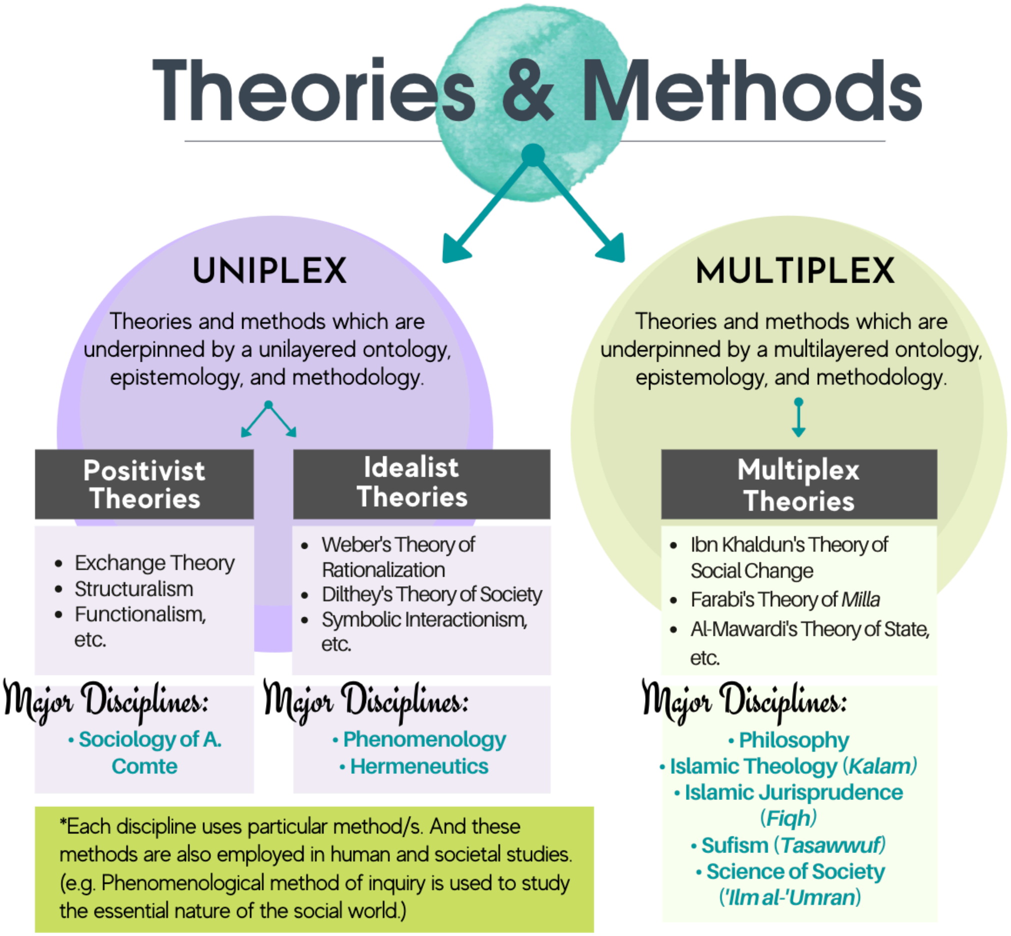
It proposes multiple methods suitable for each layer of reality. This approach also has some advantages and limitations. Its advantages are:

- It does justice to reality.
- It accommodates a diversity of intellectual focuses and discourse communities.

Limitations and challenges of multiplexity are the following:

- It takes a longer time to understand and implement.

- It entails an additional challenge to determine and manage the relations between the different layers of reality.



Theories & Methods

UNIPLEX

Theories and methods which are underpinned by a unilayered ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Positivist Theories

- Exchange Theory
- Structuralism
- Functionalism, etc.

Major Disciplines:

- **Sociology of A. Comte**

Idealist Theories

- Weber's Theory of Rationalization
- Dilthey's Theory of Society
- Symbolic Interactionism, etc.

Major Disciplines:

- **Phenomenology**
- **Hermeneutics**

*Each discipline uses particular method/s. And these methods are also employed in human and societal studies. (e.g. Phenomenological method of inquiry is used to study the essential nature of the social world.)

MULTIPLEX

Theories and methods which are underpinned by a multilayered ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Multiplex Theories

- Ibn Khaldun's Theory of Social Change
- Farabi's Theory of *Milla*
- Al-Mawardi's Theory of State, etc.

Major Disciplines:

- **Philosophy**
- **Islamic Theology (*Kalam*)**
- **Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*)**
- **Sufism (*Tasawwuf*)**
- **Science of Society (*'Ilm al-'Umran*)**

Figure 0.4: Classification of theories and methods with respect to their underpinning paradigms

4. The Structure of the Book

The present book is divided into six modules covering thirteen chapters in addition to the introduction. These thirteen chapters are covered in six separate modules with respect to subject priority and relevancy. For the reader's convenience, we explained in the introduction the fundamental notions regarding theories and methods that are necessary for a self-sufficient understanding of this book —the definitions of theory, thinking, idea, concept, fact, method and methodology. The reader will also find a new classification of different theories and methods, as uniplex and multiplex, concerning primarily their assumptions about reality and knowledge that will be thoroughly explained in the following chapters.

After this general introduction to the basics of theories and methods, the book starts with **the first module** comprising of the first three chapters, namely ontology, epistemology, and methodology. This module deals with the philosophical underpinnings of different theories and methods. It investigates the implicit assumptions and worldviews which are usually not exposed to the students of research theories and methods, and crudely classifies them into three as positivism, idealism, and the multiplex approach. Materialism and positivism are classed together, although the former is an ontological approach, while the latter is not necessarily an ontological, but also an epistemological and methodological philosophy. Besides, not all positivists are materialists. The fact that positivists do not call in metaphysics in their explanations of phenomena and stop short at observable facts by only focusing on the end causes rather than the primary or ultimate causes make them sound no different than the materialists. Being aware of the nuances between these traditions of thought, we used such terms interchangibly. Another categorization which may fairly be criticized in the first module is regarding the idealist philosophy. Although not all idealist scholars deny the existence of matter altogether as George Berkeley did, we classified all of them as idealists.

In this module, we also put forward an alternative research philosophy, namely *multiplexity*, as a new approach to be applied in all of the domains of science, in other words, nature, society and language. Multiplexity is a translation of the age-old Arabic term "*marātib*" which literally means hierarchy or levels. We coined the term "multiplexity" as its English equivalent to refer to the multiple levels of existence (physical, metaphysical and divine), knowledge (acquired via reason, sense perception, intuition, and divine revelation) and truth (relative and ultimate). In social research multiplexity would indicate a concept of human ontology with multiple levels consisting of body, mind, and soul as well as a concept of social action with observable and unobservable levels. Its diverse versions could be found in many world cultures and religions and is also deeply rooted in the traditional Islamic disciplines including philosophy, *kalām*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf*. Multiplexity calls in all levels of reality —visible, invisible, and divine— and knowledge —acquired through senses, reason and revelation— in research process for the sake of a more accurate and a more precisely corresponding-to-the-reality explanation of the complex phenomena, despite the difficulty in its application. Multiplexity not only offers a more illustrative explanation of the observable reality by its utilization of both sense perception and reason in addition to both quantitative and qualitative methods, depending on the choices of the researcher, but also sheds a bright light on the dark sides of the multifaceted reality which are not explicable by especially uniplex research philosophies. It completes the picture in which every phenomena and event become meaningful. There is not one positivism. There is not one idealism. As such, there might possibly be other conceptions of a multi-layered reality different in its details than what we have presented in this module. The essential characteristic of the multiplex approach is its preliminary acceptance and consideration of the multi-layered reality, knowledge and methods in the explanation and interpretation of phenomena in today's world.

The second module covers two subsequent chapters. Chapter Four deals with the societal sciences in different civilizations by examining the origins and historical developments of disciplines. Societal science is an umbrella term that represents a universal category to refer to knowledge systems about society in all world civilizations. Each society has developed a way to approach its social problems which are peculiar to itself. This distinctive way of dealing with social issues is shaped by the society's worldview. In line with its worldview, every civilization produces its own societal science not only to explain but also to regulate its social life. In Islamic civilization, this function is served by *fiqh* and its related disciplines. In Western civilization, it is served by the category of disciplines called social sciences. This chapter explains how *fiqh* and social sciences, which functionally correspond to each other, are differentiated through their respective ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies. Chapter Five addresses levels of analysis and their interrelations. All social phenomena can be analyzed through different units of analysis at multiple levels. One of the most debated issues in social theory is the relationship between the micro level and the macro level. Some social theorists say that individual actions determine everything that happens in the world, even when it comes to actions at the macro level. They argue that if you want to explain what is happening at the macro level, whether it be at the global, national and civilizational levels, you must look at the actions of individuals. Individual action is everything; it is what shapes everything in our social world. John Stuart Mill believed that all social behavior can be explained in terms of the psychology of the individuals rather than that of the group. For Mill, therefore, the individual is responsible for all actions at the meso and macro levels. In this sense, the micro level causes what happens at the macro and meso levels. But according to Emile Durkheim, society determines the actions of individuals, not vice-versa. According to Ibn Khaldūn, on the other hand, the micro and macro levels mutually affect one another in a circular way. As luxury increases in a society (macro-level) corruption among individuals increases (micro-level). Corruption among individuals (micro-level) culminates in the corruption of the city in general (macro-level).

The third module with two chapters is devoted to positivism in detail, its critics, and postpositivism. Starting with its ontology and epistemology, Chapter Six explores the historical background and development of the positivist approach. First, the nineteenth-century positivism of Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, J. S. Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim propounds the idea that only the scientific knowledge can help accomplish a more just society and progress toward a better future for humankind and this knowledge is only achievable through the rational evaluation of the empirical evidence. Second, the early twentieth-century positivism of the Vienna Circle, namely logical positivism, gave a new impetus to the conception of science with a staunch commitment to empiricism by demarcating knowledge from speculation, superstition and metaphysics. And finally, the mid-twentieth century positivism of Karl Popper abondoned the principle of verifiability and inductivist conception of scientific method which are considered as the defining characteristics of logical positivism in favor of the principle of falsifiability and his hypothetico-deductive method. Chapter Seven explains the radical critique of positivism by Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyeraband. The critiques are radical because they question the basic premises of the positivist scientific endeavor. We regard them as internal because they did not propose an alternative and they paved the way towards the formulation of postpositivism. We can regard the critiques of the Marxist school, feminism and post colonial theory or all the different varieties of interpretive approaches as an external critique because each are known to have established their own school of thought as well as their own epistemological, ontological and methodological approaches in addition to having established an alternative approach and separate canon outside of positivism. Postpositivism on the other hand emerged as a radical critique and revision of the basic tenets of the classical positivist paradigm.

The fourth module is about the critical approaches and covers two subsequent chapters. Chapter Eight deals with Marxism, the Frankfurt School and Feminism, while Chapter Nine explains postcolonial theory. These four major strands of critical theory all reject the assumptions of positivism and draw upon Marxist perspectives regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology. Contrary to the contention of positivist paradigms which view reality as singular and identifiable and that it can be measured and studied objectively, critical theories assume that reality is historically constructed. Historically constituted social structures determine the way we see the world and this determination is not immune to power relations and interests.

The fifth module consisting of two chapters deals with interpretive approaches. Starting with the philosophical assumptions of idealism regarding reality, knowledge, and methods, Chapter Ten explains social theories that use interpretivist methods and are underpinned by idealism such as Max Weber’s approach to social reality and social constructionism. Chapter Eleven covers Hermeneutics as a social research method. This chapter starts with the description of the history of hermeneutics. Having emerged as a method for interpretation of biblical and literary texts, hermeneutics has then spread into other disciplines of social sciences. Even though there are different hermeneutic approaches used in social studies, such as that of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey, what unites them is their opposition to positivism which overlooks the difference between the natural and social worlds. The hermeneutic approach in social sciences highlights the difference between natural and social worlds and holds that the most basic fact of social life is the meaning of an action. Thus, they claim that the social sciences should be hermeneutic: what researchers are expected to do is the interpretation of the meanings of social actions.

And finally, **the sixth module** covering the twelfth and thirteenth chapters is about multiplexity in Ibn Khaldūn’s works. Having already studied multiplex ontology, epistemology, and methodology in the first three chapters, you will be introduced to how multiplexity is manifested in Ibn Khaldūn’s works in Chapter Twelve. In *Muqaddimah*, the first systematic realistic study of human society, Ibn Khaldūn developed a science of society and a comprehensive and interdisciplinary social theory. Although Ibn Khaldūn is considered as the precursor of sociology by many scholars in the West, since his science is grounded on a multiplex worldview, he is more like an alternative to sociology than a precursor. Chapter Thirteen explains how Ibn Khaldūn’s ideas had been read, elaborated, and applied during the Ottoman times. In this last chapter, you will also learn about what Ibn Khaldūn’s thought has to say for the contemporary times that we are living in.

Summary

The main purpose of this book is to teach the reader different theories and methods used in the study of society, in addition to their philosophical underpinnings. In this book, the main thesis is that every theory is grounded on a set of assumptions about ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology necessarily requires an epistemology suitable for it and a methodology which is required by both of these ontological and epistemological underpinnings in order to obtain knowledge systematically. In the first three chapters, you will study these underpinnings and see how each of these are interconnected.

In the subsequent chapters, you will examine the origins and historical development of disciplines in order to see how the humanities and societal sciences in Western and Islamic civilizations developed. Here, you will be familiarized with a new concept called ‘societal science’ to mean knowledge systems about society in all world civilizations. Each society has developed a way to approach its social problems. This distinctive way of dealing with social issues is shaped by the society’s worldview. In line with its worldview, every civilization produces its own societal science not only to explain but also to regulate its social life. ‘Social sciences and humanities’ are Western civilization’s way of studying society and social phenomena. Having built upon a particular worldview, the concept of ‘social sciences’ that was invented in the West is not a neutral universal category. Metatheoretically, ‘social science’ is a value-laden scientific activity based on particular scientific preferences and a subcategory of ‘societal science’ which is a perspective-free universal category. Another subcategory of societal sciences as exemplified in Islamic civilization is *fiqh*. The disciplines of *lughah* and *âdâb* correspond to humanities in the Western civilization.

Then, you will study the levels of analysis -micro, meso, and macro- and their interrelations. Moreover, in order to compare and contrast theories offered in the study of social phenomena, you will first study positivist-functionalist approaches which are identified by the universalism of scientific method across nature and society, causal explanation, and the discovery of structures. You will then study the criticisms towards the positivist approach: postpositivism, critical theories, and idealist-interpretive approaches. Finally, you will learn more about multiplexity and how it shows up in Ibn Khaldūn’s works.

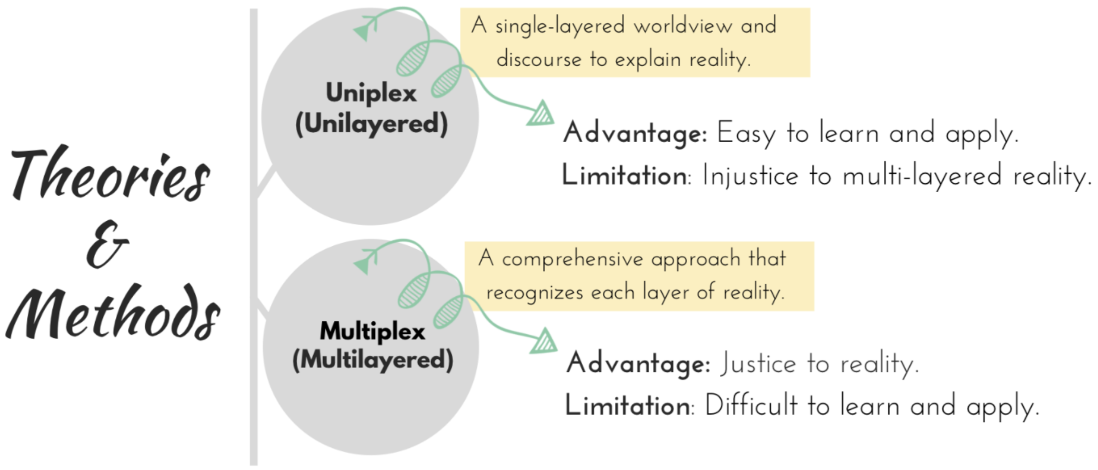

Theories & Methods
Uniplex (Unilayered)
A single-layered worldview and discourse to explain reality.
Advantage: Easy to learn and apply.
Limitation: Injustice to multi-layered reality.
Multiplex (Multilayered)
A comprehensive approach that recognizes each layer of reality.
Advantage: Justice to reality.
Limitation: Difficult to learn and apply.

Figure 0.5: Advantages and limitations of theories and methods

ACTIVITY

Discuss with your friends about what you have learned in this class and try to come up with an idea of your own.

Dig Deep

James N. Rosenau "Thinking Theory Thoroughly" in Viotti, Paul R., and Mark V. Kauppi. *International Relations Theory*. Pearson Higher Ed, 2012. p. 29-37.

Burawoy, M. (2009) The extended case method: Four countries, four decades, four great transformations, and one theoretical tradition. Univ of California Press.

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MODULE 1

MODULE

1

CHAPTER 1
Ontology

CHAPTER 2
Epistemology

CHAPTER 3
Methodology

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- define ontology and explain its relevance to social sciences and research;
- distinguish between different ontological approaches to reality, such as materialism, idealism, and multiplexity;
- reflect on your own ontological stance;
- define epistemology and explain its relevance to social sciences and research;
- distinguish between different epistemological approaches to reality such as empiricism, rationalism, and the multiplex approach;
- reflect on your own epistemological stance;
- define methodology and explain its relevance to social sciences and research;
- distinguish between different methodological approaches such as positivism, interpretivism, and the multiplex approach;
- reflect on your own methodological stance.

Chapter One

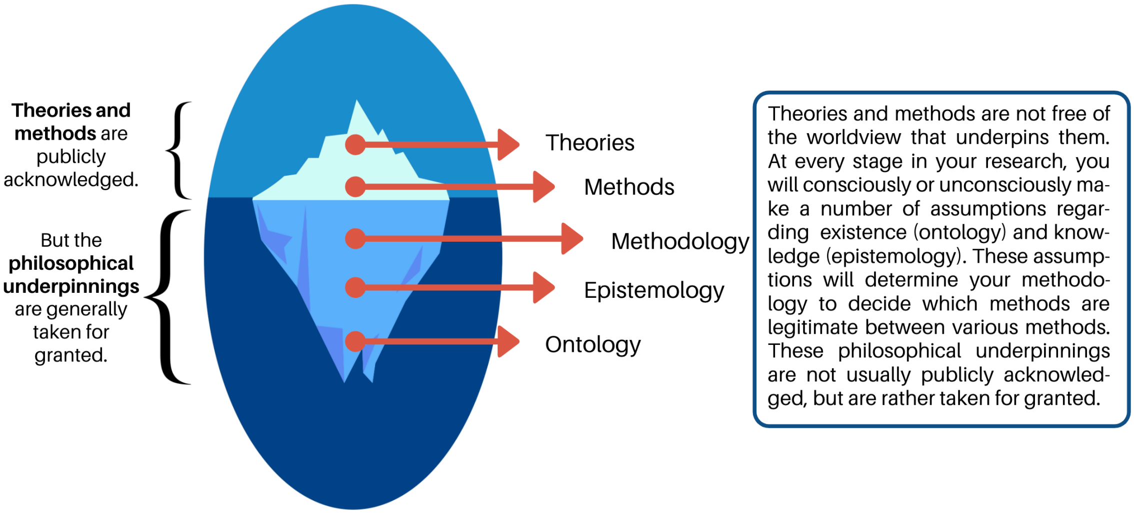
ONTOLOGY

Focus Questions

- ◊ What is ontology?
- ◊ Why is ontology important?
- ◊ How is it related to theory-building?
- ◊ Is there a reality out there? Or are there only illusions?
- ◊ What are the different ontological positions?
- ◊ What is the difference between uniplex ontology and multiplex ontology?
- ◊ What are the three levels of multiplex ontology and how do they relate to one another?
- ◊ What are the implications of adopting multiplex ontology for our understanding of nature, social action, and language?

> *Ontology and epistemology are to research what 'footings' are to a house: they form the foundations of the whole edifice.*
> (Grix 2004: 59)

Social sciences and humanities study human nature, human society, social relationships, and different aspects of social action, but the way and the aim of this study may vary from one scholar to another. For some, the goal of social research is to explain the nature of society, while for others its goal is to understand it. Social scientists developed various theories and methods suitable for their specific purposes. These different theories and methods aim to explain, understand, and order society. You may wonder why different roles are assigned to social research. You should know that whether publicly acknowledged or not, a certain worldview that takes a stand on ontology, epistemology, and methodology underpins social theories. At the moment, you may not be so familiar with the concepts of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Yet after going through the next three chapters, you will be equipped with these very crucial philosophical terms, and you will need them in social research.


Theories and methods are publicly acknowledged.
But the **philosophical underpinnings** are generally taken for granted.
Theories
Methods
Methodology
Epistemology
Ontology

Theories and methods are not free of the worldview that underpins them. At every stage in your research, you will consciously or unconsciously make a number of assumptions regarding existence (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology). These assumptions will determine your methodology to decide which methods are legitimate between various methods. These philosophical underpinnings are not usually publicly acknowledged, but are rather taken for granted.

Figure 1.1: The philosophical underpinnings of theories and methods

Our purpose here is not a philosophical exploration of these concepts, but for now, you should at least know that all theories and methods in social sciences and humanities are underpinned by an implicit or explicit:

- **Ontology**: A philosophical viewpoint on existence. It attempts to answer the question of what exists. All social theories are necessarily built upon latent philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality. (Ch. 1)

- **Epistemology**: A philosophical viewpoint about how we gain knowledge. It attempts to answer the question of how we know what we know. All social theories make latent assumptions about the nature of knowledge. (Ch. 2)

- **Methodology**: A philosophical viewpoint on research methods. It attempts to answer the question of how research should be carried out. It also involves a critical examination of existing methods of research. All methods presently used in social sciences rely on a particular methodology whether it is implicit or explicit. (Ch. 3)

After this brief introduction to the first module, let us start with what ontology is.

1. What is Ontology?

Sociology studies human society and social behavior. Physics studies matter and motion. Astronomy studies the stars and planets, and mathematics deals with numbers. All disciplines study reality specifically focused through the lens of their area of concern. They all explore something, yet none of them study everything. Ontology does. Ontology studies everything, not from a specific aspect like other disciplines do, but rather from the point of view that everything is a being. If you are to define ontology in social sciences, it is important that you step back and investigate its philosophical origins.

Ontology, put simply, is a branch of philosophy that studies existence and is concerned with the nature of what exists. It is the study of theories about what makes up reality. Although it is a philosophical branch of study, the impetus to engage in speculation about what exists is not confined to philosophers. In everyday life, we tend to classify some of our experiences as real and some as illusory. Does the image in a mirror really exist? We are often amused by the child or the cat who is confused by the image in the mirror and is mistaken for reality. You see, the distinction between appearance and reality is of crucial importance for our daily life as well. But unlike the ordinary man, philosophers attempt to provide systematic answers to the questions: 'what is the ultimate nature of reality?' 'is it possible to discover the true nature of reality?' and if so, 'what is it like?' and 'what are the categories of beings and their relations?' All of these are ontological questions, and your answers to them determine your ontological position, which is your attitude towards existence and what makes up reality.

A stone exists as a physical object. We can be quite specific about its properties, size, and color.

The mind does not exist as a physical reality. The extent to which we can have knowledge of it is more problematic than a stone. We cannot be certain where it is located. Although it is generally considered to have something to do with the brain, in the Islamic intellectual tradition, it is considered to have something to do with the heart also.

2. Why is ontology important? How is it related to theory-building?

All theories and methods make assumptions, either implicit or explicit, about what kinds of things do exist. Each theoretical perspective and methodological approach embody a certain way of understanding what is (ontology) and how we know what we know (epistemology). Many differences of opinion between social scientists regarding a particular issue have essentially resulted from their different methods and theories, which were based on different ontological and epistemological positions.

As mentioned previously, researchers usually have implicit assumptions about reality, what exists, and what can be known about it. Acknowledging their ontological and epistemological assumptions is important for several reasons. Being conscious of the ontological and epistemological beliefs that a researcher has (which are usually implicit and have to be exposed) helps us better understand the relevance of the study. Moreover, social scientists who are dogmatically attached to a particular research paradigm will not be able to appraise research conducted under a different tradition. Yet, it is a prerequisite to ground research in a particular paradigm, without which research is impossible. But there is a difference between accepting and using a paradigm, and dogmatically and blindly defending it.

Despite the latent primacy of ontology in social research as well as all human studies, ontological discussions are not often found in books outside of the field of philosophy. This should concern scholars and researchers, on the grounds that taking ontology for granted leads to inconsistency between one's ontological and epistemological assumptions and also to an incongruity of one's arguments and others' criticisms.

Therefore, every social science student should learn about ontology (with epistemology built upon it) to be able to differentiate and choose between competing theories and methods and, most importantly, to build their own theories. Otherwise, you may end up asking wrong research questions, using inappropriate methods to answer them, and making 'category mistakes' just like in the following sentence: The number seven is greener than the angels.

What are the major questions that precede theory-building:

The ontological question: What exists?
The epistemological question: (How) Can we know what exists?
The methodological question: How can we know what exists?

3. Exploring the Philosophical Foundations of Social Theories: Relating Ontology to Social Research

There is no theory without an ontology behind it. Your ontological beliefs and assumptions shape your beliefs about epistemology and methodology. This set of beliefs, or worldview, that guides research or inquiry is known as a paradigm, which is basically a way of thinking about the world. Every science operates within a paradigm that takes a stand on ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Kuhn 1996: 175). If you want to evaluate any theory, it is a good starting point to identify the assumptions that a theorist makes about these three elements. Every researcher before developing a theory must define what is the subject he or she is studying. In this sense, each particular scientific discipline may be said to have its own ontology.

4. Different Ontological Positions

You might think that the question of what exists is a simple question, but great philosophers, thinkers, and social scientists have been discussing them for hundreds of years. Over centuries, a great number of answers have been offered to the basic question of existence, but no definitive consensus seems to have been reached. However, we can classify these positions, broadly, into three:

- *Materialism*, a uniplex (uni-layered) ontology which holds that all that can truly be said to exist is matter, including mental states and consciousness which are considered as results of material interactions.
- *Idealism*, a uniplex (uni-layered) ontology that holds that the only thing that can truly be said to exist is ideas or immaterial substance.
- *Multiplexity*, a non-reductionist ontology that has a multi-layered conception of what exists including a material, non-material, and divine level.

Under each one of these approaches, many sub-schools can be classified. However, for the sake of simplicity, we shall refer to them all under these three headings. In this section, you will be introduced to ontological materialism and idealism.

Section A.
UNIPLEX ONTOLOGY

Uniplex ontology refers to any ontological perspective which sees reality as a single layer. This is also known in the history of philosophy as 'monist ontology' or 'ontological monism.' Materialism and idealism represent two well-known examples. You will first explore materialist ontology.

1. Materialist Ontology

As its name suggests, materialism is the conviction that all that exists consists solely of matter or different states of matter, and that what we perceive through our senses is all of reality. It reduces everything to material or physical phenomena. Hence, for the materialist, existence is uni-layered and mind-independent.

Materialism is a philosophical position in ontology, according to which the ultimate nature of the reality is physical, or material, and mental life is understood as an emergent property arising from matter in complex combinations.

The claim that existence is uni-layered connotes that things like love, freedom, ideas, or states of consciousness can only be explained in terms of material processes such as physical processes and chemical reactions in the brain. For example, for the materialist, saying that someone is 'in pain' is another way of saying 'C-fibers of the nerve system in his or her body are firing,' or 'being conscious' means 'an activity is occurring in the pyramidal cells of the cortex involving reverberatory circuits.' In other words, being conscious is merely about a neural activity going on in the body that can be explained in physical or material terms, and that's it.

For the materialist, the reality which is considered to be material is characterized by causal relations: the cause creates an effect, and the effect turns out to be another cause for a new effect. For example, as global temperatures rise (cause), ice and glaciers in the poles melt (effect), dumping tons of additional water into the ocean. This (cause) will cause sea levels to increase and swamp the coastal areas (effect). Such cause and effect relations demonstrate that there are certain laws behind natural and social phenomena, which science should aim to uncover. Once established, they can be predicted with certainty in the future. Behind this philosophy of science is the conviction that the world can be explained entirely by reference to physical, natural phenomena and laws.

For the materialist, cause and effect relations are observed objectively by the scientist. As a matter of fact, there is an objective reality out there that everyone can reach through observation and experiment: all that exists is ontologically objective. This is also called ontological realism. It means that objects we see around us are real. This is in contradistinction to idealism, which maintains that mental reality has priority over physical reality, and the awareness about the existence of external reality is mediated by our mind. Since the materialists focus on the objective visible reality, they believe that the purpose of science is explanation, which is all about discovering causal relations behind natural and social phenomena.

Thomas Hobbes as one of the Earliest Modern Social Thinkers to Defend Materialism

Materialism is one of the oldest schools in ontology. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) is known to be one of the first modern social scientists to apply materialist ontology to the study of human nature and society. From his time, it is evident that the ascendancy of materialism is a seventeenth-century phenomenon, making its way into philosophical thought in the same era that saw the birth of modern science, and meeting no strong opposition until idealism was revived by romantic philosophy in the nineteenth century (Gordon 1993: 384).

Hobbes insists that the physical world is real, but that the mental world -which idealists claim to be the only reality- is actually part of a material world and not a separate substance, and that the mental world can be understood as an effect of the physical motions taking place inside and outside the human body (an early version of behavioristic psychology).

The real world, according to Hobbes, is composed of bodies. A body is defined as that which, *having no dependence upon our thought, is coincident or coextended with some part of space* (Hobbes 1655: 102).

The crucial features of bodies, by which we understand them, are their positions, their magnitudes (sizes and shapes), and their motions. All other features such as color and texture are classified as accidents that are not common to all bodies and that appear and disappear without changing or destroying bodies.

He tries to explain all the features of reality in terms of the sole 'real components,' matter and motion. In this materialistic system, Hobbes reduces the role of God to a minor one. Although his contemporaries considered him an atheist, he admits a Divine presence: God accounted for the existence of the physical world and the laws by which it operated. God's actions may have been necessary to get the system running, but they do not appear to be required now. In the final analysis, the category of body rather than divine is actually enough to explain the world in its present form and state.

2. Idealist Ontology

In its popular usage, an idealist is someone who has high ideals and who struggles to achieve them in his or her life. Ontological idealism, on the other hand, is a metaphysical doctrine that asserts that reality or existence is incorporeal, immaterial and mental rather than material. For idealists, unlike materialists, reality or existence is mind-dependent or mentally constructed. Without our minds, we have no access to reality. All the data we gather goes to our mind and is then interpreted in our mind, and we attach meaning to it. Idealists, like materialists, reduce existence to one ontological domain or category, which is the ideal world consisting of meanings and ideas.

This approach to reality dates back to Plato's metaphysical theory. Plato's answer to the basic ontological question 'what is reality?' is that fundamentally, it is the 'Forms of things' that are real, not the matter itself. Things as we perceive them are forever changing. Such a world cannot be real but can only be illusory. However, in the sense world, we discover the first glimmerings of what reality actually is. The forms of things, unlike the things themselves, are unchanging and intelligible. The former is apprehended by reason, the latter by the senses. For example, individual cats may be in a continual state of alteration and may ultimately be illusory entities called 'shadow reality,' but the form of 'catness' is immutable. The meaning of the term 'cat' is always the same. Hence, Plato contended, what is real is the totality of Forms of Platonic ideas, which in Plato's accounts are meanings. From this perspective, external reality is subjugated to our mind. For instance, Hegel (one of the most prominent idealists) is well known to propose the following dictum; the rational alone is real. He also said: what is real is rational, what is rational is real.

Berkeley's theory, which he called 'immaterialism,' the world conceived of without matter, is one of the first major modern idealistic theories.

The extreme idealists, unlike materialists, maintain that what seems 'out there' is actually nothing more than illusion. Reality is only a projection of our minds, and that there is nothing 'out there' inde-pendent of our projections. When you look out, what you really see is a world created by the mind. In such a case, perception is the reality. Therefore, every-thing is ontologically subjective, just like in the example of lavender which smells different to you than it does to someone else.

In a sociological sense, idealism emphasizes how ideas or beliefs and values shape society.

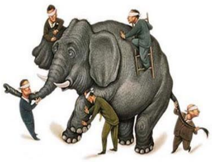
So far, you have seen that materialism and idealism believe that reality is unilayered (either materialist or idealist) and try to reduce everything to a single layer. The next section will explain a third way of seeing the world, the multiplex approach to existence, which tries to go beyond the clash of mutually exclusive worldviews.

Section B.
MULTIPLEX ONTOLOGY

Marâtib al-wujūd

Above you learned two ontologies -materialist and idealist- which we refer to as uniplex ontologies. You learned that materialists argue that the world is made of matter, whereas idealists argue that it is made of ideas. This constitutes a historical divide in Western philosophy.

> An elephant was in a dark house: some Hindus had brought it for exhibition. In order to see it, people had to enter the darkness. As seeing it with the eye was impossible, each reached out to feel it in the dark with the palm of his hand. The hand of one fell on its trunk: he said, 'This creature is like a water-pipe.' The hand of another touched its ear: to him it seemed to be like a fan. Since another handled its leg, he said, 'I found the elephant's shape to be like a pillar.' Another laid his hand on its back: he said, 'Truly, this elephant was like a throne.' Similarly, whenever anyone heard a description of the elephant, he understood it only based on the part that he touched. On account of their different angles of approach, their statement differed radically: one man entitled it 'dâl,' another 'alif.' If there had been a candle in each hand, they would have perceived the whole creature. The eye of sense-perception is only like the palm of the hand: the palm hath not power to reach the whole of him (the elephant)... We are dashing against each other, like boats: our eyes are darkened, though we are in the clear water (Rumi : V 3, 1259-1272)



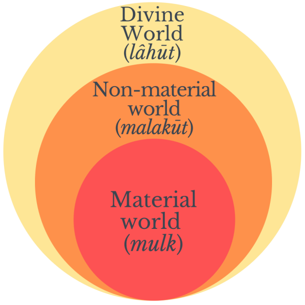
Why Is Ontology Important?

The famous philosopher Karl Popper (1902-1994) once asked his students to make an observation. The students asked him what to observe. Popper replied that what is to be observed is determined by one's worldview. Once they decide what to observe, they will decide how to observe it and what to do with the interpretation of their observation (Popper 2000:61). This means that what we choose to observe depends on what kind of a worldview we have. In a similar fashion, if we ask: 'What do you see?' the student would probably say, 'what do you mean? I see many things!' Now, what the student actually sees depends on how he also conceives of reality. This will lead him to present his ideas concerning what is beyond the physical eye. If the student has such a conception, then he will interpret his ideas in reference to that conception. As if in a chain reaction, the student's ideas will be determined one by one through his conception of reality. Supposing that the student makes a mistake in his ontology, all the following theories and explanations of the student will be false.

In this section you are going to learn about another type of ontology, namely multiplex ontology, which is called *marātib al-wujūd* in Arabic. This ontological view opposes the positivist and idealist reductionism of existence to a particular level and acknowledges that there is one reality with at least three levels of existence. According to this view, there is a material level of existence (*ālam al-mulk*), a non-material level of existence (*ālam al-malakūt*), and a divine level of existence (*ālam al-lahūt*).

1. Multiplex Ontology

Multiplex ontology is a multilayered view of reality and existence. While materialism and idealism believe that reality is unilayered (either materialist or idealist) and try to reduce everything to a single layer, multiplex scholars believe that there are at least three levels of existence. Levels of existence are called '*marātib al-wujūd*' in Arabic and are divided into at least three levels, namely the material level (*ālam al-mulk*), the non-material level (*ālam al-malakūt*), and the divine level (*ālam al-lahūt*). We have referred to this as the



MULTIPLEX ONTOLOGY

'multilayered view of reality' because these realms of reality are not independent of each other and not physically separated (as the latter two realms are not physical at all).

The understanding of a multiplex worldview can be found in the works of early Muslim scholars such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna). The term *marātib al-wujūd* has explicitly been used in the works of other Muslim scholars such as Al-Ghazālī's *Mi'yār al-'Ilm* ('The Standard of Knowledge'), and Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī's *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* ('The Conclusive Argument from God') while many others devoted their work exclusively on the concept such as 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Ibrāhīm Jīlī's *Marātib al-wujūd wa-haqīqat kull mawjūd* ('Levels of Being and the Reality of All That Exists'), Jalal al-Dīn al-Dawwani's *Risāla marātib al-wujūd* ('The Treatise on the Levels of Existence'), and 'Abdullāh Salahi Ushshākī's *Risalat marātib al-wujūd* ('The Treatise on the Levels of Existence'). One of the most recent contemporary works on multiplex ontology is Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's *The Degrees of Existence*.

Multiplex scholars believe that there is one reality but it has multiple levels. This may be called *unity in multiplexity*. When they study any level of reality, they explore it from the material and ideal perspectives because they believe that every being has a material dimension as well as non-material dimension. Material reality is characterized by causal relations, cause and effect relations which we observe in nature. In the natural world something causes another thing to happen, but the same thing is true in the non-material world as well. There is a network of causation in the world: one thing causes the other thing and that thing causes something else. Things are connected to each other through causality and this is what materialists exclusively focus on. Because the materialists focus on the objective visible reality, they believe that the purpose of science is explanation. Explanation is a key term in science which refers to discovering causal relations in nature and society. In addition to causal relations, from the perspective of multiplex ontology, there are interpretive relations in the world as well. These are called semantic relations. From this perspective, nature is seen as a book in which all objects help, in an interconnected way, to construct a meaning analogous to the way words do so in a book. The concept of interpretation is another key term used by idealists in contradistinction to explanation.

Interpretation refers to subjective and contextual account of social reality through mental processes. Further discussion on this issue will be in the subsequent chapters.

According to the multiplex approach, you do not have to choose between subjective or objective reality, because they are not mutually exclusive. If you accept one, you are not required to reject the other. This is not the case for idealists and positivists. Idealists believe that if you accept subjective reality you have to reject objective reality. As for materialists, they believe that if you accept objective reality, you have to reject subjective reality. They argue that these two realities cannot co-exist. By now you must have realized that this is a false dichotomy. In Islamic thought, such false dichotomies are avoided, and multiplex ontology is an example of that. However, this multiplex approach is not adopted by Muslim thinkers only. There are many thinkers in the West as well as in other parts of the world like India, China and Africa who also adopt this ontological view. It is only materialists and idealists who reject it. But today, materialism and idealism are more dominant than the multiplex approach. There are very small groups outside the Muslims world who adopt multiplex ontology.

	MATERIALISM	IDEALISM	MULTIPLEX APPROACH
🔴	Physical world is the only reality. Matter is physical substance that occupies space and has mass.	Material things, such as notebooks and trees, aren't really objects that exist independently of our minds.	Matter exists. It has certain 'animate' characteristics like seeing and hearing.
🟠	Ideas, feelings, mind, and etc. are all physical phenomena.	The only reality is the world of Ideas. Ideas construct the material world.	The world of invisible realities includes not only ideas, but also jinn, angels, heavens etc.
🟡	There is no divine world. These are pure speculations.	Either the mind is God, or there is no God.	Divine world is the realm where only God exists. It is beyond any perception.

Figure 1.2: Different ontological approaches to reality

2. Multiplex Nature, Society, and Language

Science divides areas of study into three main domains: nature, society, and language. How does a multiplex view of reality shape our understanding in these three domains?

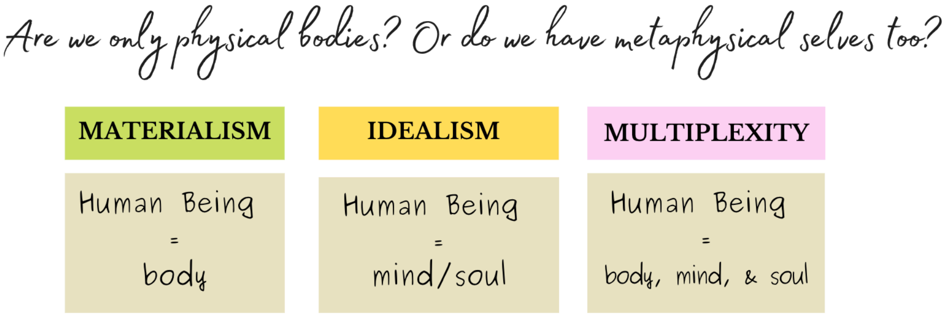

Are we only physical bodies? Or do we have metaphysical selves too?
MATERIALISM
IDEALISM
MULTIPLEXITY
Human Being = body
Human Being = mind/soul
Human Being = body, mind, & soul

Figure 1.3: What is a human being?

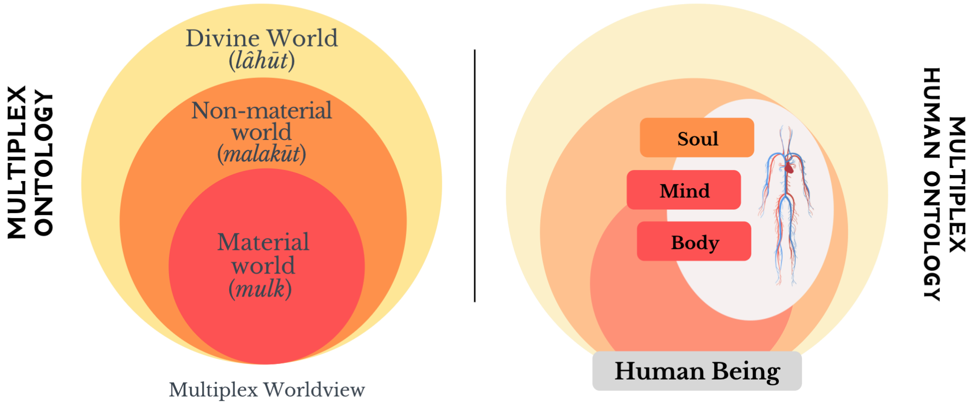

MULTIPLEX ONTOLOGY
Divine World (*lâhût*)
Non-material world (*malakût*)
Material world (*mulk*)
Multiplex Worldview
Soul
Mind
Body
Human Being
MULTIPLEX HUMAN ONTOLOGY

Figure 1.4: Multiplex human existence as a bridge between physical and metaphysical worlds

2.1. Multiplex Ontology on Nature

The study of nature from a multiplex perspective is based on the ontological assumption that both causal and interpretative relations exist in nature. They exist in two interconnected layers. The object of the first layer is causal relations. The network of causal relations is explored through causal explanations. Causal explanation is focused on the objective analysis of nature and the discovery of causal relations. Such research needs to be supported by the effort to decipher the meaning of nature. The object of the second layer is interpretative relations. Understanding this layer requires a semantic approach. This second type of research is referred to as semiotics of nature. These two layers are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they complement each other, as causal and interpretative ways of research belong to different levels of analysis.

2.2. The implications of the modern and traditional approaches on environmental ethics

The traditional relationship with nature is meaningful and therefore ethical; it is the relationship between the readers and the book through which they reach the Creator. From a traditional Islamic perspective, with its physical and interpretative structures, nature has been entrusted to humanity. It is humanity's duty to protect nature. Nature protects people, too. Nature gains its meaning with the existence of human beings. In the introduction to *Marifetnāme*, Ibrahim Hakkı uses the metaphor of the rose garden for nature, a rose garden the fragrance of which is the human being himself.

Who is Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı?

Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı (d. 1780) is a Turkish Muslim Sufi scholar. He is a poet, author, astronomer, physicist, psychologist, and sociologist.

Semiotics: Science of Signification

Erzurumlu Ibrahim Hakkı (d. 1780) tried to show that the positivist approach based on causal explanation is already included in the traditional approach that combines both causal explanation and interpretation (Şentürk: 2014).

Example 1: What is a rose?
According to modern Natural Sciences a rose is a plant. According to the multiplex approach to nature, a rose is not only a plant, but also a symbol of beauty, happiness, and love in many cultures; it is also the symbolic queen of all the flowers. Looking at a rose or smelling it imparts an inner feeling. A merely botanical view does not take this into account.

Example 2: What is a human being?
According to modern natural sciences, a human being is an animal. According to the multiplex view of nature, represented by Hakkı, a human being is the scent of the rose garden named the universe. He uses the metaphor of a rose garden for the universe, and the metaphor of the scent of the universe for the human being.

In that respect, nature is a work of art, and human beings are the best ornament for it. Allah created the world like a work of art, and the masterpiece is the human being. Modern science constructs a purely conflictual relationship between nature and humanity. Nature needs to be defeated and controlled by human rationality. Modern science presents control over the powers of nature as a challenge to be overcome through the human intellect. From this perspective, nature appears as an enemy rather than the loving mother that Ibrahim Hakkı depicts (Şentürk: 2014).

The World as 'Âyah'

Ibrahim Hakkı compares nature to a book. According to him, the universe is a book written by Allah in order to declare His existence, mercy, all-encompassing power, and all-encompassing knowledge.

According to Ibrahim Hakkı, each being is a letter in the book of the universe. Allah, the Creator of the book of nature, has bestowed upon it the meaning it carries. The book of nature carries the aim of communication of Allah's word to humanity. The duty of the reader - that is, people - is to discover and learn about the meanings placed in that book. In other words, the final meaning of the universe can be discovered and not constructed by people; the meaning discovered is the meaning put in place by Allah in the universe that He has created, while the meaning attributed to nature by people is a human construction. However, symbols carry many meanings, and the meanings derived from symbols are dependent on the level of the reader. Meaning is made up of two connected layers that are not mutually exclusive: the seen (zāhir) and the hidden (bātin). Moreover, as Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjāni proposes, sometimes a meaning is used as a tool to point to another meaning, and then we have the 'meaning of meaning.' This multilayered theory of meaning can be referred to as 'multiplex meaning.'

According to Ibrahim Hakkı, Allah's intention in creating the book of nature is to educate us in a compassionate manner. He says: 'This world is educating us like a compassionate mother.' The signs Allah shows us in the human soul, body, and the world of nature educate us about His existence, His attributes, and the meaning of life and the world.

From this perspective nature has two functions: meeting our material needs and educating us. Modern science focuses only on the first one and excludes the second function of nature. Seeing nature as a book not only educates us about the meaning of existence but also sets up a meaningful relationship between human beings and nature. This kind of relationship is very different from the relationship that modern science establishes between nature and human beings, which is one of submission and control. Materialism forges a relationship between people and nature that is devoid of meaning.

2.3. Multiplex Ontology, Social Action and Relations

In Islamic civilization, human action is studied by *fiqh* in general sense. All our actions, according to the multiplex view, have both a visible and an invisible side. The invisible side is the intention behind our actions. The internal encompasses the external. Our internal world is richer and larger than our external existence.

Both *fiqh* and social sciences study human action. However, positivist social scientists focus on its observable side, idealists at its non-observable side, and multiplex *fiqh* scholars on both. The external dimension of human action is studied by *fiqh al-zāhir*, also called *furū' al-fiqh*, and the internal dimension is studied by *fiqh al-bātin*, also called '*tasawwuf*.'

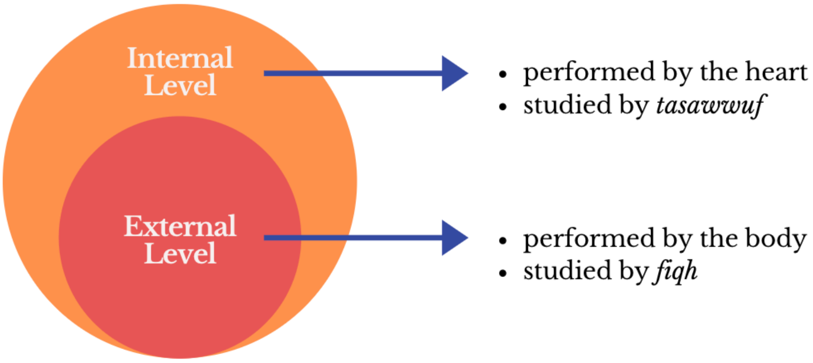


Figure 1.5: Levels of human action

The dictionary definition of the word *fiqh* is 'deep understanding.' That is why *fiqh* expresses a superior understanding compared to *'ilm'* (knowledge). The discipline of *fiqh* was developed by Muslims in order to analyze human behavior and action (*'amal*) in general and human rights and responsibilities in particular.

Who is Imam Abū Hanīfah?

Abū Ḥanīfah (in full: Abū Ḥanīfah an-Nuʿmān Ibn Thābit (born 699, Kūfah, Iraq–died 767, Baghdad), is a Muslim jurist and theologian whose systematization of Islamic legal doctrine was acknowledged as one of the four main schools of Islamic law. The school of Abū Ḥanīfah acquired such prestige that its doctrines were applied by a majority of Muslim dynasties. Even today it is widely followed in India, Pakistan, Turkey, Central Asia, and some Arab countries.

The most commonly known definition of *fiqh* is: معرفة النفس ما لها وما عليها which can be translated as "one's knowledge about one's rights and obligation". This definition is attributed to Imam Abū Hanīfah, the founder of the Hanafi school of thought. This definition of *fiqh* foregrounds the purpose of '*ilm* (obtaining knowledge about one's rights and responsibilities) and the subject of investigation (behavior).

Ottoman scholars, who belonged to the Hanafi School of law, believe that fiqh has four layers, namely *fiqh al-akbar, usūl al-fiqh, furū' al-fiqh*, and *fiqh al-bātin.*

- ***Al-Fiqh al-akbar*** (the greatest *fiqh*) is the branch of fiqh that prepares the ontological and epistemological ground for fiqh. It is similar to theology and philosophy but uses different ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. It is commonly known as *aqāid, usūl al-din,* or *kalām.*

- ***Usūl al-fiqh*** (methodology of *fiqh*) is the discipline of *fiqh* that consists of the common methodology of all Islamic disciplines and thought.

- ***Furū' al-fiqh*** or *fiqh al-zāhir* (practical *fiqh*) is the social and normative science that deals with the external, observable, and objective aspects of behavior. The direct translation of the phrase *furū' al-fiqh* is 'branches of *fiqh*.'

- ***Fiqh al-bātin*** or *al-fiqh al-wijdānī* (inner *fiqh*) is the discipline of fiqh that studies the inner aspect of human action. It is commonly known as *tasawwuf*.

Fiqh is only an example of how a multiplex approach is implemented to the study of human action. Other civilizations may have similar disciplines that perform similar functions.

Another example for multiplex approach is in Islamic morality. In Islamic ethics and morality, it is accepted that there are multiple levels of morality and ethics. There is a legal level (*sharī'a*), an altruistic level (*tarīqa*), and a level beyond selfhood (*haqīqah*). Morality is based on reciprocity at the legal level, on forgiveness at the altruistic level, and on benevolence at the level beyond selfhood.

What is your morality level?

When someone does something bad to you, what will you do?

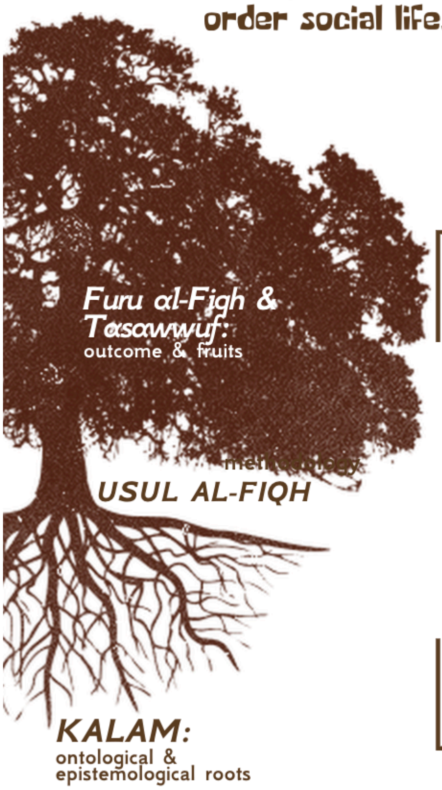
a. I will take revenge by doing something worse to that person.
b. I will do something bad to that person (*qisas*).
c. I will forgive that person.
d. I will not only forgive but also do something good to that person.

Every civilization has a societal science to explain and order social life.

In Western civilization, **social science** serve this function.

In Islamic civilization, ***Fiqh*** and its related disciplines are used.

In East Asian civilization, **Confucianism** is one of the approaches that are used.


Furu al-Fiqh & Tasawwuf:
outcome & fruits
methodology
USUL AL-FIQH
KALAM:
ontological & epistemological roots

Fiqh

1. ***Fiqh al-Akbar: Kalam***
   (conceptual foundations regarding existence and sources of knowledge; ontological and epistemological underpinnings)
2. ***Usul al-Fiqh***
   (analyzing and understanding the Qur'an and Sunnah, extrapolating norms for human behaviour; general methodology of all Islamic disciplines)
3. ***Furu' al-Fiqh (Al-Fiqh al-Amali; Fiqh al-Zahir)***
   (regarding observable human action in different domains)
4. ***Fiqh al-Batin (Tasawwuf)***
   (regarding internal dimension of human action)

Fiqh al-Akbar and the Ottoman Millet System

The ontology of *fiqh al-akbar* is made up of several layers that incorporate both material and non-material existence. The layer of non-material existence itself has many layers. This multiplex discipline has long served as the '*amal* science' or 'societal science' of the Ottoman millet system that facilitated the co-existence of people from various religions and cultures. The Ottomans accepted that truth had multiple levels, such as linguistic truth (*al-haqīqah al-lughawiyya*), customary truth (*al-haqīqah al-'urfiyya*), and religious truth (*al-haqīqah al-shar'iyya*). They have also accepted that truth varied according to *sharī'a* (law), *tarīqa* (spiritual path), and *haqīqah* (experiential gnosis). A diversity management system helped the various conceptions of truth and their proponents live together in peace for centuries. This is what is commonly called the millet system.

2.4. Multiplex Ontology and Language

Language, literature, and humanities in the Islamic intellectual heritage have often been produced and interpreted from a multiplex meaning perspective. Multiplex meaning -or, simply put, the levels of meaning- have been analyzed by Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjāni (d. 471AH, 1078 CE) at two levels: meaning and 'the meaning of meaning' (*m'anā'l m'anā*). The first points to the literal meaning of the word, and the second to the symbolic and figurative meaning of the word.

An example Jurjāni used to illustrate multiplex meaning is the following: 'She is a woman who sleeps until midday' (*nawm al-duhā*). Jurjāni uses this sentence as an example to demonstrate the various levels of meaning: The literal meaning is easily understood, however, it does not reflect what the sentence is trying to say. When this is the case, one needs to look at the meaning of meaning. At the figurative level, the sentence means 'she is such a wealthy lady that she has servants to see to her daily needs and do her daily chores.' Thus, what the sentence is trying to express is not that the woman sleeps until midday but that she is wealthy and does not need to get up before noon.

Summary

- Social theories are underpinned by a certain worldview, whether publicly acknowledged or not, that takes a stand on ontology, epistemology, and methodology.
- Ontology is a philosophical viewpoint on existence. It attempts to answer the question of what exists. All social theories are necessarily built upon latent philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality.
- Your ontological beliefs and assumptions shape your beliefs about epistemology and methodology. This set of beliefs, or worldview, that guides research or inquiry is known as a paradigm, which is basically a way of thinking about the world.
- Materialism is a uniplex (uni-layered) ontology which holds that all that can truly be said to exist is matter, including mental states and consciousness which are considered as results of material interactions.
- For the materialist, the reality which is considered to be material is characterized by causal relations: the cause creates an effect, and the effect turns out to be another cause for a new effect.
- Such cause and effect relations demonstrate that there are certain laws behind natural and social phenomena, which science should aim to uncover. Once established, they can be predicted with certainty in the future.
- Materialist ontology asserts that there is an objective reality out there that everyone can reach through observation and experiment: all that exists is ontologically objective.
- Since the materialists focus on the objective visible reality, they believe that the purpose of science is explanation, which is all about discovering causal relations behind natural and social phenomena.
- Idealism is a uniplex (uni-layered) ontology that holds that the only thing that can truly be said to exist is ideas or immaterial substance.

- Ontological idealism maintains that what seems ‘out there’ is actually nothing more than illusion. Reality is only a projection of our minds, and that there is nothing ‘out there’ independent of our projections. Therefore, everything is ontologically subjective.
- Multiplex ontology opposes the positivist and idealist reductionism of existence to a particular level and acknowledges that there are at least three levels of existence.
- These levels are: the material level of existence (*ālam al-mulk*), the non-material level of existence (*ālam al-malakūt*), and the divine level of existence (*ālam al-lahūt*).
- Multiplex ontology is not just a combination of levels of existence. It is an approach that does not simply incorporate them but rather supersedes them by demonstrating the unity of all layers.
- Multiplex natural sciences are based on the vision of multilayered causal and interpretative relations in nature. The first layer is made up of the causal relations and the second layer is made up of interpretative relations. These two layers are not mutually exclusive.
- All our actions according to the multiplex view have both a visible and an invisible side. The external dimension of human action is studied by ‘*fiqh al-zāhir*’ (also called *‘furū‘ al-fiqh’*) and the internal dimension is studied by a ‘*fiqh al-bātin*’ (also called ‘*tasawwuf*’).
- Fiqh is only an example of how a multiplex approach is implemented in the study of human action. Other civilizations may have similar disciplines that perform similar functions.
- Language, literature, and humanities in the Islamic intellectual heritage have often been produced and interpreted from a multiplex meaning perspective.
- Multiplex meaning has two levels, namely the literal meaning and the figurative meaning.

Key Words

paradigm:	a set of beliefs that takes a stand on ontology, epistemology, and methodology that guides research or inquiry.
materialism:	is a philosophical position in ontology according to which the ultimate nature of the reality is physical, or material, and mental life is understood as an emergent property arising from matter in complex combinations.
explanation:	discovering causal relations behind natural and social phenomena.
idealism:	is a philosophical position in ontology according to which nature of reality or existence is incorporeal, immaterial, mental, mind-dependent or mentally constructed.
***marātib al-wujūd* or multiplex ontology:**	is a multilayered view of reality and existence. Levels of existence are called '*marātib al-wujūd*' in Arabic and are divided into at least three levels, namely the material level (*ālam al-mulk*), the non-material level (*ālam al-malakūt*), and the divine level (*ālam al-lāhūt*).
fiqh:	the literal meaning of the word *fiqh* is ‘deep understanding.’ As a discipline, *fiqh* was developed by Muslims in order to analyze human behavior and action (‘*amal*) in general, and human rights and responsibilities in particular. The most commonly known definition of *fiqh* is ‘one’s knowledge concerning one’s rights and

	responsibilities that stem from one’s actions.' This definition is attributed to Imam Abū Hanīfah, the founder of the Hanafi school of thought.
al-fiqh al-akbar (greatest _fiqh_):	is the branch of *fiqh* that prepares the ontological and epistemological ground for *fiqh*. It is similar to theology and philosophy but uses different ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. It is commonly known as *aqāid*, *usūl al-din*, or *kalām*.
usūl al-fiqh: (methodology of _fiqh_):	is the discipline of fiqh that consists of the common methodology of all Islamic disciplines.
furū’ al-fiqh:	is the social and normative science that deals with the external, observable, and objective aspects of behavior. The direct translation of the phrase *furū’ al-fiqh* is ‘branches of *fiqh*.’
fiqh al-bātin or _al-fiqh al-wijdāni_:	is the discipline of *fiqh* that studies the inner aspect of human action. It is commonly known as *tasawwuf*.
m’anā al-m’anā or multiplex meaning:	the view that language has at least two levels of meaning. The first meaning is the superficial meaning of the word, and the second is the symbolic and figurative meaning of the word.

Dig Deep

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Chapter Two

EPISTEMOLOGY

Focus Questions

- ◊ What is epistemology?
- ◊ How do you know that you know what you know?
- ◊ What are the major epistemological approaches?
- ◊ Do our senses deceive us?
- ◊ What is the difference between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge?
- ◊ What are the objective and subjective sources of knowledge according to multiplex epistemology?
- ◊ How do you know that what you know is true?
- ◊ What are the three levels of certainty in knowledge according to multiplex epistemology?
- ◊ What are the main differences between uniplex and multiplex epistemologies?

In the previous chapter, you have learned that the issue of what exists is far more complicated than it appears at first sight. If you believe that all that exists is matter, then you naturally believe that all sorts of things such as mind, thinking, feelings, and consciousness can be explained in material terms, and that the reality is 'out there' independently of human beings. Yet if you believe that all that exists is ideas, then you don't believe in the objective reality of things. Things around you are mere illusions. There is no reality independent of human beings. The human mind constructs what we call external reality. Or, if you believe that the previous two approaches to reality and existence are not necessarily mutually exclusive, then you believe in the fact that there are both objective and subjective realities. The material phenomena are real, yet the reality is not confined only to matter, energy, or causal relations. In addition to the material reality, there is also an ideal or immaterial reality, and that level is studied by semiotics in natural sciences, rhetoric (*balāgha*) in linguistics, and *fiqh al-bātin* or *tasawwuf* in social studies.

Your stand towards these three ontological positions will affect and determine how you conceive and obtain the knowledge of the reality you are dealing with. The ontological conception of materialism entails the epistemological conviction that the knowledge of reality is objective. The ontological conception of idealism, on the other hand, leads to the idea that it is subjective and relative, while that of the multiplex approach implies that there are both objective and subjective levels of the knowledge of reality. As you might have noticed, ontological assumptions are always closely related to epistemological assumptions, as one’s ontological conception of reality has implications on how to acquire knowledge.

In this chapter, you will learn in detail what epistemology is. You will realize that our everyday assurances of knowledge are not as well-founded as we might assume.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A BAT?

Thomas Nagel

… There is something that it is like to be a bat. Now we know that most bats (the microchiroptera, to be precise) perceive the external world primarily by sonar, or echolocation, detecting the reflections, from objects within range, of their own rapid, subtly modulated, high-frequency shrieks. Their brains are designed to correlate the outgoing impulses with the subsequent echoes, and the information thus acquired enables bats to make precise discriminations of distance, size, shape, motion, and texture comparable to those we make by vision. But bat sonar, though clearly a form of perception, is not similar in its operation to any sense that we possess, and there is no reason to suppose that it is subjectively like anything we can experience or imagine. This appears to create difficulties for the notion of what it is like to be a bat. We must consider whether any method will permit us to extrapolate to the inner life of the bat from our own case, and if not, what alternative methods there may be for understanding the notion.

Our own experience provides the basic material for our imagination, whose range is therefore limited. It will not help to try to imagine that one has webbing on one's arms, which enables one to fly around at dusk and dawn catching insects in one's mouth; that one has very poor vision, and perceives the surrounding world by a system of reflected high-frequency sound signals; and that one spends the day hanging upside down by one's feet in an attic. In so far as I can imagine this (which is not very far), it tells me only what it would be like for me to behave as a bat behaves. But that is not the question. I want to know what it is like for a bat to be a bat. Yet if I try to imagine this, I am restricted to the resources of my own mind, and those resources are inadequate to the task. I cannot perform it either by imagining additions to my present experience, or by imagining segments gradually subtracted from it, or by imagining some combination of additions, subtractions, and modifications. To the extent that I could look and behave like a wasp or a bat without changing my fundamental structure, my experiences would not be anything like the experiences of those animals. On the other hand, it is doubtful that any meaning can be attached to the supposition that I should possess the internal neurophysiological constitution of a bat. Even if I could by gradual degrees be transformed into a bat, nothing in my present constitution enables me to imagine what the experiences of such a future stage of myself thus metamorphosed would be like. The best evidence would come from the experiences of bats, if we only knew what they were like.

So if extrapolation from our own case is involved in the idea of what it is like to be a bat, the extrapolation must be incompletable. We cannot form more than a schematic conception of what it is like. For example, we may ascribe general types of experience on the basis of the animal's structure and behavior. Thus we describe bat sonar as a form of three-dimensional forward perception; we believe that bats feel some versions of pain, fear, hunger, and lust, and that they have other, more familiar types of perception besides sonar. But we believe that these experiences also have in each case a specific subjective character, which it is beyond our ability to conceive. And if there is conscious life elsewhere in the universe, it is likely that some of it will not be describable even in the most general experiential terms available to us. (The problem is not confined to exotic cases, however, for it exists between one person and another. The subjective character of the experience of a person deaf and blind from birth is not accessible to me, for example, nor presumably is mine to him. This does not prevent us each from believing that the other's experience has such a subjective character.)

This brings us to the edge of a topic that requires much more discussion than I can give it here: namely, the relation between facts on the one hand and conceptual schemes or systems of representation on the other. My realism about the subjective domain in all its forms implies a belief in the existence of facts beyond the reach of human concepts. Certainly it is possible for a human being to believe that there are facts which humans never will possess the requisite concepts to represent or comprehend. Indeed, it would be foolish to doubt this, given the finiteness of humanity's expectations. After all, there would have been transfinite numbers even if everyone had been wiped out by the Black Death before Cantor discovered them. But one might also believe that there are facts which could not ever be represented or comprehended by human beings, even if the species lasted forever-simply because our structure does not permit us to operate with concepts of the requisite type. This impossibility might even be observed by other beings, but it is not clear that the existence of such beings, or the possibility of their existence, is a precondition of the significance of the hypothesis that there are humanly inaccessible facts. (After all, the nature of beings with access to humanly inaccessible facts is presumably itself a humanly inaccessible fact.) Reflection on what it is like to be a bat seems to lead us, therefore, to the conclusion that there are facts that do not consist in the truth of propositions expressible in a human language. We can be compelled to recognize the existence of such facts without being able to state or comprehend them.

…

This bears directly on the mind-body problem. For if the facts of experience-facts about what it is like for the experiencing organism are accessible only from one point of view, then it is a mystery how the true character of experiences could be revealed in the physical operation of that organism. The latter is a domain of objective facts par excellence-the kind that can be observed and understood from many points of view and by individuals with differing perceptual systems. There are no comparable imaginative obstacles to the acquisition of knowledge about bat neurophysiology by human scientists, and intelligent bats or Martians might learn more about the human brain than we ever will.

*Excerpt from: Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?", The Philosophical Review, Vol. 83, No. 4 (Oct., 1974), pp. 435-450.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

Bertrand Russell

Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it? This question, which at first sight might not seem difficult, is really one of the most difficult that can be asked. When we have realized the obstacles in the way of a straightforward and confident answer, we shall be well launched on the study of philosophy —for philosophy is merely the attempt to answer such ultimate questions, not carelessly and dogmatically, as we do in ordinary life and even in the sciences, but critically after exploring all that makes such questions puzzling, and after realizing all the vagueness and confusion that underlie our ordinary ideas.

In daily life, we assume as certain many things which, on a closer scrutiny, are found to be so full of apparent contradictions that only a great amount of thought enables us to know what it is that we really may believe. In the search for certainty, it is natural to begin with our present experiences, and in some sense, no doubt, knowledge is to be derived from them. But any statement as to what it is that our immediate experiences make us know is very likely to be wrong. It seems to me that I am now sitting in a chair, at a table of a certain shape, on which I see sheets of paper with writing or print. By turning my head, I see out of the window buildings and clouds and the sun. I believe that the sun is about ninety-three million miles from the earth; that it is a hot globe many times bigger than the earth; that, owing to the earth's rotation, it rises every morning, and will continue to do so for an indefinite time in the future. I believe that, if any other normal person comes into my room, he will see the same chairs and tables and books and papers as I see, and that the table which I see is the same as the table which I feel pressing against my arm. All this seems to be so evident as to be hardly worth stating, except in answer to a man who doubts whether I know anything. Yet all this may be reasonably doubted, and all of it requires much careful discussion before we can be sure that we have stated it in a form that is wholly true.

To make our difficulties plain, let us concentrate attention on the table. To the eye it is oblong, brown and shiny, to the touch it is smooth and cool and hard; when I tap it, it gives out a wooden sound. Anyone else who sees and feels and hears the table will agree with this description, so that it might seem as if no difficulty would arise; but as soon as we try to be more precise our troubles begin. Although I believe that the table is 'really' of the same colour all over, the parts that reflect the light look much brighter than the other parts, and some parts look white because of reflected light. I know that, if I move, the parts that reflect the light will be different, so that the apparent distribution of colours on the table will change. It follows that if several people are looking at the table at the same moment, no two of them will see exactly the same distribution of colours, because no two can see it from exactly the same point of view, and any change in the point of view makes some change in the way the light is reflected.

For most practical purposes these differences are unimportant, but to the painter they are all-important: the painter has to unlearn the habit of thinking that things seem to have the colour which common sense says they 'really' have, and to learn the habit of seeing things as they appear. Here we have already the beginning of one of the distinctions that cause most trouble in philosophy —the distinction between 'appearance' and 'reality,' between what things seem to be and what they are. The painter wants to know what things seem to be, the practical man and the philosopher want to know what they are; but the philosopher's wish to know this is stronger than the practical man’s, and is more troubled by knowledge as to the difficulties of answering the question.

To return to the table. It is evident from what we have found, that there is no colour which preeminently appears to be the colour of the table, or even of any one particular part of the table —it appears to be of different colours from different points of view, and there is no reason for regarding some of these as more really its colour than others. And we know that even from a given point of view the colour will seem different by artificial light, or to a colour-blind man, or to a man wearing blue spectacles, while in the dark there will be no colour at all, though to touch and hearing the table will be unchanged. This colour is not something which is inherent in the table, but something depending upon the table and the spectator and the way the light falls on the table. When, in ordinary life, we speak of the colour of the table, we only mean the sort of colour which it will seem to have to a normal spectator from an ordinary point of view under usual conditions of light. But the other colours which appear under other conditions have just as good a right to be considered real; and therefore, to avoid favouritism, we are compelled to deny that, in itself, the table has any one particular colour.

The same thing applies to the texture. With the naked eye one can see the gram, but otherwise the table looks smooth and even. If we looked at it through a microscope, we should see roughnesses and hills and valleys, and all sorts of differences that are imperceptible to the naked eye. Which of these is the 'real' table? We are naturally tempted to say that what we see through the microscope is more real, but that in turn would be changed by a still more powerful microscope. If, then, we cannot trust what we see with the naked eye, why should we trust what we see through a microscope? Thus, again, the confidence in our senses with which we began deserts us.

The shape of the table is no better. We are all in the habit of judging as to the 'real' shapes of things, and we do this so unreflectingly that we come to think we actually see the real shapes. But, in fact, as we all have to learn if we try to draw, a given thing looks different in shape from every different point of view. If our table is 'really' rectangular, it will look, from almost all points of view, as if it had two acute angles and two obtuse angles. If opposite sides are parallel, they will look as if they converged to a point away from the spectator; if they are of equal length, they will look as if the nearer side were longer. All these things are not commonly noticed in looking at a table, because experience has taught us to construct the 'real' shape from the apparent shape, and the 'real' shape is what interests us as practical men. But the 'real' shape is not what we see; it is something inferred from what we see. And what we see is constantly changing in shape as we, move about the room; so that here again the senses seem not to give us the truth about the table itself, but only about the appearance of the table.

Similar difficulties arise when we consider the sense of touch. It is true that the table always gives us a sensation of hardness, and we feel that it resists pressure. But the sensation we obtain depends upon how hard we press the table and also upon what part of the body we press with; thus the various sensations due to various pressures or various parts of the body cannot be supposed to reveal directly any definite property of the table, but at most to be signs of some property which perhaps causes all the sensations, but is not actually apparent in any of them. And the same applies still more obviously to the sounds which can be elicited by rapping the table.

Thus, it becomes evident that the real table, if there is one, is not the same as what we immediately experience by sight or touch or hearing. The real table, if there is one, is not immediately known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known. Hence, two very difficult questions at once arise; namely, (1) Is there a real table at all? (2) If so, what sort of object can it be?

It will help us in considering these questions to have a few simple terms of which the meaning is definite and clear. Let us give the name of 'sense-data' to the things that are immediately known in sensation: such things as colours, sounds, smells, hardnesses, roughnesses, and so on. We shall give the name 'sensation' to the experience of being immediately aware of these things. Thus, whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation of the colour, but the colour itself is a sense-datum, not a sensation. The colour is that of which we are immediately aware, and the awareness itself is the sensation. It is plain that if we are to know anything about the table, it must be by means of the sense-data —brown colour, oblong shape, smoothness, etc. — which we associate with the table; but, for the reasons which have been given, we cannot say that the table is the sense-data, or even that the sense-data are directly properties of the table. Thus, a problem arises as to the relation of the sense-data to the real table, supposing there is such a thing.

The real table, if it exists, we will call a 'physical object.' Thus we have to consider the relation of sense-data to physical objects. The collection of all physical objects is called 'matter.' Thus our two questions may be re-stated as follows: (1) Is there any such thing as matter? (2) If so, what is its nature?

The philosopher who first brought prominently forward the reasons for regarding the immediate objects of our senses as not existing independently of us was Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753). His Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, in Opposition to Sceptics and Atheists, undertake to prove that there is no such thing as matter at all, and that the world consists of nothing but minds and their ideas. Hylas has hitherto believed in matter, but he is no match for Philonous, who mercilessly drives him into contradictions and paradoxes, and makes his own denial of matter seem, in the end, as if it were almost common sense. The arguments employed are of very different value: some are important and sound, others are confused or quibbling. But Berkeley retains the merit of having shown that the existence of matter is capable of being denied without absurdity, and that if there are any things that exist independently of us they cannot be the immediate objects of our sensations.

There are two different questions involved when we ask whether matter exists, and it is important to keep them clear. We commonly mean by 'matter' something which is opposed to 'mind,' something which we think of as occupying space and as radically incapable of any sort of thought or consciousness. It is chiefly in this sense that Berkeley denies matter; that is to say, he does not deny that the sense-data which we commonly take as signs of the existence of the table are really signs of the existence of something independent of us, but he does deny that this something is nonmental, that it is neither mind nor ideas entertained by some mind. He admits that there must be something which continues to exist when we go out of the room or shut our eyes, and that what we call seeing the table does really give us reason for believing in something which persists even when we are not seeing it. But he thinks that this something cannot be radically different in nature from what we see, and cannot be independent of seeing altogether, though it must be independent of our seeing. He is thus led to regard the 'real' table as an idea in the mind of God. Such an idea has the required permanence and independence of ourselves, without being —as matter would otherwise be— something quite unknowable, in the sense that we can only infer it, and can never be directly and immediately aware of it.

Other philosophers since Berkeley have also held that, although the table does not depend for its existence upon being seen by me, it does depend upon being seen (or otherwise apprehended in sensation) by some mind —not necessarily the mind of God, but more often the whole collective mind of the universe. This they hold, as Berkeley does, chiefly because they think there can be nothing real— or at any rate nothing known to be real except minds and their thoughts and feelings. We might state the argument by which they support their view in some such way as this: ‘Whatever can be thought of is an idea in the mind of the person thinking of it; therefore nothing can be thought of except ideas in minds; therefore anything else is inconceivable, and what is inconceivable cannot exist.’

Such an argument, in my opinion, is fallacious; and of course, those who advance it do not put it so shortly or so crudely. But whether valid or not, the argument has been very widely advanced in one form or another; and very many philosophers, perhaps a majority, have held that there is nothing real except minds and their ideas. Such philosophers are called 'idealists.' When they come to explaining matter, they either say, like Berkeley, that matter is really nothing but a collection of ideas, or they say, like Leibniz (1646-1716), that what appears as matter is really a collection of more or less rudimentary minds.

But these philosophers, though they deny matter as opposed to mind, nevertheless, in another sense, admit matter. It will be remembered that we asked two questions; namely, (1) Is there a real table at all? (2) If so, what sort of object can it be? Now both Berkeley and Leibniz admit that there is a real table, but Berkeley says it is certain ideas in the mind of God, and Leibniz says it is a colony of souls. Thus, both of them answer our first question in the affirmative, and only diverge from the views of ordinary mortals in their answer to our second question. In fact, almost all philosophers seem to be agreed that there is a real table. They almost all agree that, however much our sense-data —colour, shape, smoothness, etc. — may depend upon us, yet their occurrence is a sign of something existing independently of us, something differing, perhaps, completely from our sense-data whenever we are in a suitable relation to the real table.

Now obviously this point in which the philosophers are agreed —the view that there is a real table, whatever its nature may be is vitally important, and it will be worthwhile to consider what reasons there are for accepting this view before we go on to the further question as to the nature of the real table. Our next chapter, therefore, will be concerned with the reasons for supposing that there is a real table at all.

Before we go farther it will be well to consider for a moment what it is that we have discovered so far. It has appeared that, if we take any common object of the sort that is supposed to be known by the senses, what the senses immediately tell us is not the truth about the object as it is apart from us, but only the truth about certain sense-data which, so far as we can see, depend upon the relations between us and the object. Thus, what we directly see, and feel is merely ‘appearance,' which we believe to be a sign of some ‘reality’ behind. But if the reality is not what appears, have we any means of knowing whether there is any reality at all? And if so, have we any means of finding out what it is like?

Such questions are bewildering, and it is difficult to know that even the strangest hypotheses may not be true. Thus, our familiar table, which has roused but the slightest thoughts in us hitherto, has become a problem full of surprising possibilities. The one thing we know about it is that it is not what it seems. Beyond this modest result, so far, we have the most complete liberty of conjecture. Leibniz tells us it is a community of souls: Berkeley tells us it is an idea in the mind of God; sober science, scarcely less wonderful, tells us it is a vast collection of electric charges in violent motion.

Among these surprising possibilities, doubt suggests that perhaps there is no table at all. Philosophy, if it cannot answer so many questions as we could wish, has at least the power of asking questions which increase the interest of the world, and show the strangeness and wonder lying just below the surface even in the commonest things of daily life.

*Excerpt from: Russel, Bernard. *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 1983, pp. 1-6.

1. What is epistemology?

Epistemology is one of the fundamental branches of philosophy and deals with such questions as 'What is knowing?', 'What are the means of knowing?' and 'How does knowing take place?'. Etymologically coming from the Greek word *episteme*, which means ‘knowledge,’ epistemology, in its simplest terms, is the study of knowledge. It is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge and how we come to know.

Examine your store of information for a second. You will find that some of it is certain, while some part of it is not. We generally feel quite certain about our information based on our personal experiences. Yet we are skeptical of or at least less sure about the information that we acquire from sources which are not reliable authorities. Sometimes we do make mistakes, and so do experts we trusted. We continually revise our store of information throughout our lives. Very often, the information or view that we have gained through our personal experience turns out to be open to question. We think that we see or hear something, but it is actually not the reality. Even in more ordinary cases, we see that our sense information can mislead us. For example, when we stir our tea with a teaspoon, we see that the teaspoon appears to be bent when partially immersed in water. When it is out, it appears straight. In such a case, our senses give us contradictory information about the teaspoon. This situation may bother us and may even make us skeptical about whether we actually know anything. Philosophers are even more concerned about this and investigate the nature of knowledge.

2. Why is epistemology important? How is it related to theory-building?

Adhering to an ontological belief system, whether explicitly or implicitly, guides one to certain epistemological assumptions, and our epistemological assumptions influence our research design. Epistemology, as already mentioned, concerns how we make justifiable claims about our knowledge of the things we wish to study.

Awareness about your ontological and epistemological assumptions is important for several reasons. Being conscious of the ontological and epistemological beliefs of a researcher helps us better understand the study. Therefore, you should learn about epistemology to be able to differentiate and choose between competing theories and methods and, most importantly, to build your own theory. Otherwise, the inadequate awareness about epistemology may lead you to ask the wrong research questions or choose inappropriate approaches for your research question.

The purpose of research is to gain knowledge about a subject, but a lack of awareness about the nature of knowledge and its sources will undermine this effort. In contrast, awareness about the nature of knowledge and proper sources to gain it will help you to reach your aim more easily and systematically by choosing the proper tools to reach it. Wrong assumptions about the nature of data may lead you to make false analysis of the collected data. For instance, a positivist might fall into a mistake if he does not take the subjective component of data collection into account.

3. Exploring the Philosophical Foundations of Social Theories: Relating Epistemology to Social Research

There is no theory without an epistemology behind it. Your epistemological beliefs, which are shaped by your ontological assumptions, determine your methodology, all of which together underpin your theory and research. Research is generally thought of as a basis for making ‘knowledge-claims.' Your philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the extent of human knowledge will ascertain which source(s) of knowledge you will use in your research.

What do you think knowledge is? You might think this is something simple and easy to learn, but when you truly think about it, it is not as easy as it appears. In fact, the term ‘knowledge’ is used in many different ways by different philosophers and scholars. In this chapter, by knowledge, we mean the information or beliefs that are unquestionably true. To put it more clearly, knowledge is an idea that we have in our minds which corresponds to the external reality. If it is the same with what is outside the mind, then this is called knowledge. Therefore, a knowledge should be certain and legitimate. But how are we supposed to reach knowledge, when even our basic source of knowledge, namely the senses, mislead us? Let us now consider some of the answers that philosophers offered to these epistemological questions.

4. Different Epistemological Positions

Three major traditions have attempted to discover what we can know, how we gain knowledge, and the extent to which we can be certain about our knowledge. They are namely:

- **Positivist epistemology** or **empiricism** is the epistemological perspective that accepts that knowledge only or primarily can come from the senses. Empiricism stimulated the rise of experimental sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The works of John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1753), and David Hume (1711-1776) promoted it. Most of the earlier empiricists were idealists, while the majority of the later ones are materialists. In this book, we are primarily concerned with the materialist perspective known as positivism which is dominant today.

- **Idealist epistemology** or ***rationalism*** is the epistemological view that reason, not the senses, is the ultimate source of knowledge, as opposed to empiricism. Plato (428-348 B.C.E), Descartes (1596-1650), Malebranche (1638-1715), Leibniz (1646–1716), Spinoza (1632- 1677), and Hegel (1770-1831) are some of the most prominent rationalist theorists who maintain that, by using our reason alone, we can obtain knowledge which cannot possibly be false.

- **Multiplex epistemology** or *marātib al-ʿilm*, on the other hand, is the epistemological viewpoint that goes beyond the dichotomy between sense perception and reason represented by the previous two epistemological traditions. According to this approach, knowledge can objectively be acquired through senses (*al-hawās al-salīma*), reason (*al-ʿaql*), and reported knowledge (*al-khabar al-sādiq*). There are also subjective sources of knowledge such as dreams, intuition, and spiritual unveiling (*kashf*).

Section A.
POSITIVIST AND IDEALIST EPISTEMOLOGY

This section is about the two major epistemological traditions of positivism and idealism, namely rationalism and empiricism, that attempt to answer what can we know, how we acquire this knowledge, and how certain we can be of it.

1. Positivist Epistemology: Empiricism

Positivist epistemology or empiricism is a philosophical viewpoint about knowledge which is based on the ontological assumption that reality is ‘out there’ whether humans think about it or not. The reality which can be reduced to matter and explained in material terms is, therefore, accessible through sense experience. Thus, epistemologically, observation and experiments are the ways through which understanding begins, and, only through empirical confirmation, certainty may ultimately be achieved and knowledge is obtained. Reasoning, on the other hand, is dependent on this knowledge. Reason, therefore, plays only a secondary role in interpreting the knowledge we gain through our senses.

As you may have noticed, positivist epistemology gives primacy to sensory experience rather than rational insight. All knowledge is ultimately grounded upon experience. Therefore, for an empiricist, all knowledge is *a posteriori* (that is, derived from experience). The term *a posteriori* indicates induction, which means reasoning from particular cases to general principles. (e.g. The sun has risen every day in the past, therefore the sun will rise tomorrow.)

These philosophical terms may sound a bit unfamiliar, yet you make use of them in your everyday life. For example, when you are driving, you turn the steering wheel clockwise to go to the right, not the left. In most dangerous circumstances, you stake your life on this assumption. What makes you so sure about it? Or, every time you use the can opener, your cat runs into the kitchen thinking that you are opening pet food for it. Whenever you use the can opener, even though you are opening a can for yourself, you know that the cat will immediately run, as it always does. You are sure, because every time you turned the steering wheel clockwise, the car moved toward the right. And every time you opened a can, your cat run into the kitchen. These inferences are based on probability. If something happened in a particular way in the past, then it will probably do so in the future, unless proven otherwise. It is logically possible that the next experience will be different, even if it has never been so before.

For an empiricist, reality is both ontologically and epistemologically objective. Since the reality out there is ontologically objective, we can have epistemologically objective knowledge of it through sense experience. Therefore, knowledge is value-free and exists independent of the subject. A theory which is underpinned by positivist epistemology, or empiricism, will thereby aim at explaining, describing, and predicting social events by uncovering the universal laws behind the observed phenomena.

2. Idealist Epistemology: Rationalism

The appearances of things constantly change, but this change is so slow that we are not able to realize it easily. If you contemplate the day-night cycle, the changing of seasons, and the aging of animate beings and especially humans, you will realize that nothing stays the same for a moment. If reliable knowledge only comes from the senses, which provide us with visible information, as empiricists argue, then how can the knowledge of the ever-changing appearances of things be certain? Or how can we be certain of the truth of the judgments that we make?

Idealist epistemology or rationalism is a philosophical viewpoint on knowledge asserting that all knowledge comes not from sense experience but from reason. For a rationalist, it is possible to achieve certainty only by means of our rational faculty. It gives primacy to rational insight rather than sense experience. All knowledge is eventually grounded upon reason. Therefore, for a rationalist, all knowledge is a priori, obtained independently of experience. A priori knowledge involves deduction, which means reasoning from generalities to specific conclusions. The following sentence is an example of deductive reasoning: 'All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.'

According to Plato (428-348 B.C.E.), a prominent Greek idealist philosopher and disciple of Socrates (470-399 B.C.E.), what can be known are those features of things that do not change at all. Our senses familiarize us only with the world of appearances, which is in constant change. We cannot acquire knowledge through only visible appearances. To be able to obtain knowledge, there must be something firm and unalterable in the world. These constant features are called 'Ideas' or 'Forms' by Plato, and their knowledge can only be attained through reason.

If you look at your fourth finger and compare it with the middle and smallest one, you will see that your fourth finger is bigger than the smallest one and smaller than the middle. How is it possible that a finger is simultaneously big and small? For Plato, a student who realizes this type of problem created by the senses will find himself or herself looking for meanings or the real nature of things. As in the example of the paradox of the finger, the evident discrepancies in the sense world will direct the student toward the intelligible world to look for Platonic ideas.

PLATO: THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

Excerpt from The Republic, Book VII

(With Socrates in bold and the interjections of Glaucon (Plato's brother) in regular font)

— Behold! Human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

— I see.

— And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

— You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

— Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

— True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

— And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

— Yes, he said.

— And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

— Very true.

— To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

— That is certain.

> — And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive someone saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision, —what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, —will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?
> — Far truer.
> — And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?
> — True, he said.
> — And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

As you may have noticed, 'the Allegory of the Cave' is quoted here in order to show how sense experience deceives us by likening normal human condition to that of living all the time in a cave, where one is only able to see shadows cast on a wall. As demonstrated in this allegory, rationalism upholds that the senses cannot provide us with any absolute certainty.

A theory that is underpinned by idealist epistemology, or rationalism, will thereby aim at not explaining but understanding the social events through interpretation. Even though rationalism uses deductive reasoning in knowledge-claims, a theory underpinned by idealism will use inductive methods, since reality is subjective and explained through non-causal relations and interpretation.

In a nutshell, rationalism propounds the following assumptions:

- The knowledge of existence, which is mental, is reached only through our minds.
- Rational insight rather than sensory experience is the ultimate source of knowledge.
- Sense perception can mislead us.
- The actor's intentions and actions are linked.
- Causal explanation applies only to the natural world, not the social world.

So far, you have learned that the two major traditions in epistemology, namely empiricism and rationalism, maintain that either the senses or reason is the ultimate source of knowledge. The knowledge of reality is *either a posteriori* or *a priori*. The next section will explain a third way of conceiving knowledge and its acquisition, namely multiplex epistemology, which tries to go beyond the dichotomy created by positivism and idealism.

Section B.
MULTIPLEX EPISTEMOLOGY

In the previous section, you learned what epistemology is. We first asked the question: what is epistemology? Then we presented two types of epistemology, namely materialist epistemology and idealist epistemology. Materialists argue that we can learn about the external world through sense perception, because they assume that everything can be observed and measured. Idealists argue that we can learn about the external world through reason, because they assume that everything exists in our minds and can be understood rationally. This constitutes a fundamental divide in Western philosophy.

In this section you are going to learn about another type of epistemology, namely *multiplex epistemology,* called *marātib al-'ilm* in Arabic. This epistemological view opposes the positivist and idealist reductionism of sources of knowledge to a particular level and acknowledges that there are at least three levels of knowledge. As we mentioned above, at one level knowledge can be acquired through sense perception *(al-hawās al-salīma),* at another level it can be acquired through reason *(‘aql),* and at the third level through revelation *(al-khabar al-sādiq)* (Şentürk 2014).

1. Multiplex Epistemology

Multiplex epistemology has existed for centuries in ancient Western and Eastern civilizations before modernity. Muslim scholars have developed it to the highest extent and used it extensively in their works. For this reason, we will mostly focus on its use in Islamic civilization.

As you know, your ontology determines your epistemology. If you believe that the subject you are studying has multiple levels, then you need an epistemology for each level of existence. For example, if you believe that the human being has body, mind, and soul, you implicitly assume that there are three levels of existence. In order to study the body of a human being, you rely on empirical sources of knowledge (positivist epistemology), and in order to study the mind, you need to rely on rational sources of knowledge (idealist epistemology). What about the soul? In order to study the soul, what kind of epistemology would you use?

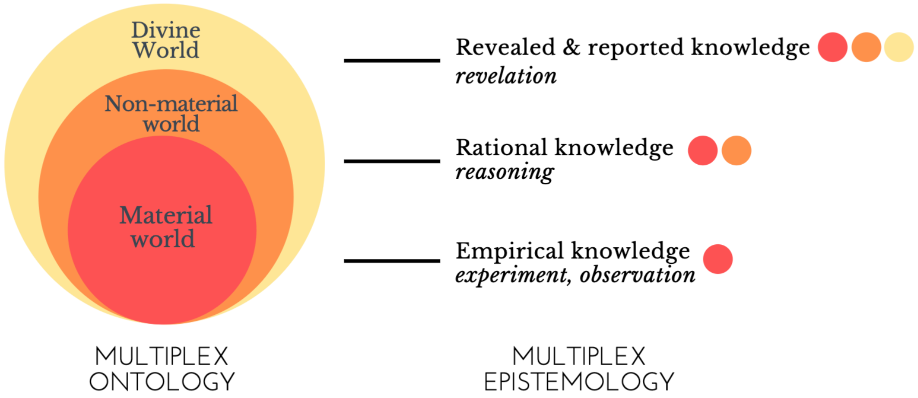

Divine World
Non-material world
Material world
Revealed & reported knowledge
revelation
Rational knowledge
reasoning
Empirical knowledge
experiment, observation
MULTIPLEX ONTOLOGY
MULTIPLEX EPISTEMOLOGY

Figure 2.1: Multiplex ontology and epistemology

In order to understand the material world, multiplex scholars rely on empirical knowledge, experiments, and observation by using sense perception. That is why they are in a way empiricists, too, but only at the material level of existence. For the non-material level of existence, they use rational epistemology. For the divine level of existence, they use revelation as the main source of knowledge. Know that reason can help you to know about the existence of Allah, but it cannot tell you what kind of attributes He has. This is why you need revelation.

As you can see, there is a parallel between the levels of existence and the levels of knowledge. Within multiplex epistemology, knowledge is classified in different ways. In one of these classifications, knowledge is either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. *A priori* knowledge is also called self-evident knowledge: it does not need any proof to be accepted. You do not need any proof to prove that you exist, right? So this is *a priori* knowledge. If you try to prove *a priori* knowledge with some other proof, it leads to a vicious cycle. *A priori* knowledge is called *badīhī* or *dharūrī* in Arabic. This type of knowledge serves as a starting point to prove *a posteriori* knowledge which needs to be proven.

2. Sources of Knowledge in Multiplex Epistemology

According to multiplex epistemology, sources of knowledge are classified into two categories: objective and subjective.

2.1. Objective Sources of Knowledge

Objective sources of knowledge include sense perception, reason, and revealed knowledge or revelation. These are objective in the sense that people can share them and can prove something in such a way that other people also accept it. We already talked about sense perception, reason, and revealed knowledge. Revelation is a category under true reported knowledge, '*al-khabar al-sadiq*.'

There are too many things you have neither seen nor even thought about but heard from someone reliable and trustworthy, right? For example, how do you know that your mother is really your mother? This is a reported fact, isn't it? Many things that you think you know are actually reported knowledge, because you did not test or prove them rationally or empirically. This is all reported knowledge. Most of the things we learn from books are also reported knowledge. Revelation is considered a reported knowledge because messengers report that knowledge from Allah.

OBJECTIVE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

Revelation & True reports
al-khabar al-sādiq

Reason
al-'aql al-salīm

Sense perception
al-hawass al-salīma

2.2. Subjective Sources of Knowledge

According to multiplex epistemology, there are subjective sources of knowledge, too. An example of such sources is **intuition**. Sometimes, you intuitively know something. This intuitive knowledge may be right or wrong. Intuition and other subjective sources of knowledge are subjective because you cannot prove the correctness of that type of knowledge gained through intuition to other people even though you may be convinced that it is true.

SUBJECTIVE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

- Intuition (*hiss*)
- Dreams (*ruya*)
- Inspiration (*ilham*)
- Opening of the heart's eye (*kashf*)

Another subjective source of knowledge is **dreams**. Great thinkers, including August Kohler (d.1948), Dmitri Mendeleev (d. 1907), and many others, stated that they have gained some knowledge through dreams. It is possible to consider dreams a source of knowledge, but you cannot prove something that you saw in your dream to other people. Do you think a judge in the court can say, 'I saw in my dream that this person is innocent'? No. He may himself believe, based on his dream, that the person is innocent, but this does not have any significance in the court. This is because in the court you need objective evidence to prove or disprove something.

Other subjective sources of knowledge include **inspiration** and **spiritual unveiling** *(kashf). Kashf* may also be translated as an opening of the eye of the heart and is used by Sufis as a source of knowledge. Sufis believe that we have five external senses and five internal senses, and these internal senses may be activated through practice. Sufis persist in piety, good morality, selfless service to others, and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) to reach this level. These practices may result in the opening of the eye of the heart. At that point, the Sufi may start seeing things through the eye of the heart. This is accepted as a legitimate source of knowledge by multiplex epistemology but is also subjective. You cannot say: 'with the eye of my heart, I saw that this person is innocent.' This is not a proper place to use this kind of knowledge. Even in the field of religion, a *faqih* (jurist) or a *mufti* (jurist consult) cannot base a *fiqh* rule on *kashf*. If a *mufti* says: 'This is permissible (*halāl),*' he must bring some evidence from the Quran or some rational or empirical reported evidence.

What is the Difference between Intuition and Inspiration?

Intuition is usually based on some evidence. You have some evidence, but this evidence is not enough to prove something. You can, for instance, look at the sky and say, "I intuitively know that it is going to rain," but you cannot provide proof or evidence for it. **Inspiration**, on the other hand, is usually based on no evidence at all. It is a knowledge that you suddenly receive somehow.

You may ask, how are the objective and subjective sources of knowledge used in practice? Know that in life there are areas where objective knowledge is required, like in a courthouse. A judge cannot say, "I intuitively know that this person is innocent." This is not going to be accepted, because he needs to provide proof, be it empirical, rational, or reported knowledge such as a witness, but you can get some knowledge intuitively and use it to develop hypotheses or ideas for a novel or a poem.

Ghazālī on *Kashf*

As a Subjective Source of Knowledge

The thirst after the comprehension of things as they really are was my habit and custom from a very early age. It was instinctive with me, a part of my God-given nature, a matter of temperament and not of my choice or contriving. Consequently as I drew near the age of adolescence the bonds of mere authority (taqlid) ceased to hold me and inherited beliefs lost their grip upon me, for I saw that Christian youths always grew up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Muslim youths to be Muslims. I heard, too, the Tradition related of the Prophet of God according to which he said: 'Everyone who is born is born with a sound nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian. My inmost being was moved to discover what this original nature really was and what the beliefs derived from the authority of parents and teachers really were. The attempt to distinguish between these authority-based opinions and their principles developed the mind, for in distinguishing the true in them from the false differences appeared.

I therefore said within myself: "To begin with, what I am looking for is knowledge of what things really are, so I must undoubtedly try to find what knowledge really is'. It was plain to me that sure and certain knowledge is that knowledge in which the object is disclosed in such a fashion that no doubt remains along with it, that no possibility of error or illusion accompanies it, and that the mind cannot even entertain such a supposition. Certain knowledge must also be infallible; and this infallibility or security from error is such that no attempt to show the falsity of the knowledge can occasion doubt or denial, even though the attempt is made by someone who turns stones into gold or a rod into a serpent. Thus, I know that ten is more than three. Let us suppose that someone says to me: 'No, three is more than ten, and in proof of that I shall change this rod into a serpent'; and let us suppose that he actually changes the rod into a serpent and that I witness him doing so. No doubts about what I know are raised in me because of this. The only result is that I wonder precisely how he is able to produce this change. Of doubt about my knowledge there is no trace.

After these reflections I knew that whatever I do not know in this fashion and with this mode of certainty is not reliable and infallible knowledge; and knowledge that is not infallible is not certain knowledge.

Scepticism and the Denial of All Knowledge

Thereupon I investigated the various kinds of knowledge I had, and found myself destitute of all knowledge with this characteristic of infallibility, except in the case of 'sense-perception and necessary truths. So I said: 'Now that despair has come over me, there is no point in studying any problems except on the basis of what is self-evident, namely, necessary truths and the affirmations of the senses. I must first bring these to be judged in order that I may be certain on this matter. Is my reliance on sense-perception and my trust in the soundness of necessary truths of the same kind as my previous trust in the beliefs I had merely taken over from others and as the trust most men have in the results of thinking? Or is it a justified trust that is in no danger of being betrayed or destroyed?

I proceeded therefore with extreme earnestness to reflect on sense-perception and on necessary truths, to see whether I could make myself doubt them. The outcome of this protracted effort to induce doubt was that I could no longer trust sense-perception either. Doubt began to spread here and say: 'From where does this reliance on sense-perception come? The most powerful sense is that of sight. Yet when it looks at the shadow it sees it standing still, and judges that there is no motion. Then by experiment and observation after an hour it knows that the shadow is moving and, moreover, that it is moving not by fits and starts but gradually and steadily by infinitely small distances in such a way that it is never in a state of rest. Again, it looks at the heavenly body and sees it small, the size of a shilling; yet geometrical computations show that it is greater than the earth in size'.

In this and similar cases of sense-perception the sense as judge forms his judgements, but another judge, the intellect, shows him repeatedly to be wrong; and the charge of falsity cannot be rebutted.

To this I said: 'My reliance on sense-perception also has been destroyed. Perhaps only those intellectual truths which are first principles (or derived from first principles) are to be relied upon, such as the assertion that ten are more than three, that the same thing cannot be both affirmed and denied at one time, that one thing is not both generated in time and eternal, nor both existing and non-existent, nor both necessary and impossible'.

Sense-perception replied: 'Do you not expect your reliance on intellectual truths will fare like your reliance on sense-perception? You used to trust in me; then along came the intellect-judge and proved me wrong; if it were not for the intellect-judge you would have continued to regard me as true. Perhaps behind intellectual apprehension there is another judge who, if he manifests himself, will show the falsity of intellect in its judging, just as, when intellect manifested itself, it showed the falsity of sense in its judging. The fact that such a supra-intellectual apprehension has not manifested itself is no proof that it is impossible'.

My ego hesitated a little about the reply to that, and sense-perception heightened the difficulty by referring to dreams. 'Do you not see', it said, 'how, when you are asleep, you believe things and imagine circumstances, holding them to be stable and enduring, and, so long as you are in that dream-condition, have no doubts about them? And is it not the case that when you awake you know that all you have imagined and believed is un founded and ineffectual? Why then are you confident that all your waking beliefs, whether from sense or intellect, are genuine? They are true in respect of your present state; but it is possible that a state will come upon you whose relation to your waking consciousness is analogous to the relation of the latter to dreaming. In comparison with this state your waking consciousness would be like dreaming! When you have entered into this state, you will be certain that all the suppositions of your intellect are empty imaginings. It may be that that state is what the Sufis claim as their special 'state' (spiritual unveiling), for they consider that in their 'states', which occur when they have withdrawn into themselves and are absent from their senses, they witness states (or circumstances) which do not tally with these principles of the intellect. Perhaps that 'state is death; for the Messenger of God (God bless and preserve him) says: "The people are dreaming; when they die, they become awake'. So perhaps life in this world is a dream by comparison with the world to come; and when a man dies, things come to appear differently to him from what he now beholds, and at the same time the words are addressed to him: 'We have taken off thee thy covering, and thy sight today is sharp' (Q. 50, 21).

When these thoughts had occurred to me and penetrated my being, I tried to find some way of treating my unhealthy condition; but it was not easy. Such ideas can only be repelled by demonstration; but a demonstration requires a knowledge of first principles; since this is not admitted, however, it is impossible to make the demonstration. The disease was baffling, and lasted almost two months, during which I was a sceptic in fact though not in theory nor in outward expression. At length God cured me of the malady; my being was restored to health and an even balance; the necessary truths of the intellect became once more accepted, as I regained confidence in their certain and trustworthy character.

This did not come about by systematic demonstration or marshalled argument, but by a light which God most high cast into my breast. That light is the key to the greater part of knowledge. Whoever thinks that the understanding of things Divine rests upon strict proofs has in his thought narrowed down the wideness of God's mercy. When the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) was asked about 'enlarging' (sharh) and its meaning in the verse, 'Whenever God wills to guide a man, He enlarges his breast for islām (i.e. surrender to God)' (Q. 6, 125), he said, 'It is a light which God most high casts into the heart. When asked, "What is the sign of it?', he said, 'Withdrawal from the mansion of deception and return to the mansion of eternity.' It was about this light that Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'God created the creatures in darkness, and then sprinkled upon them some of His light.' From that light must be sought an intuitive understanding of things Divine. That light at certain times gushes from the spring of Divine generosity, and for it one must watch and wait—as Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'In the days of your age your Lord has gusts of favour; then place yourselves in the way of them'.

The point of these accounts is that the task is perfectly fulfilled when the quest is prosecuted up to the stage of seeking what is not sought (but stops short of that). For first principles are not sought, since they are

> present and to hand; and if what is present is sought for, it becomes hidden and lost. When, however, a man seeks what is sought (and that only), he is not accused of falling short in the seeking of what is sought.
>
> (Watt, Montgomery. *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1953: 19-27)

3. Levels of Knowledge in Multiplex Epistemology

Multiplex scholars classify knowledge under three main categories: *'ilm, ‘irfān* or *ma'rifa, and* divine knowledge. *‘Ilm* is knowledge acquired through sense perception or reason. *‘Irfān* or *ma'arifa* is knowledge acquired through inner experience. This is the difference between *'ilm* and *‘irfān*. If someone has both *'ilm* and *irfān* or *ma’rifa,* it means that he has rational knowledge about something and has also experienced it. Divine knowledge is neither *'ilm* nor *‘irfān*. It is completely different. Allah’s knowledge is very different from human knowledge because it is not acquired.

Allah knows how the world will be before the world comes into existence because He is its Creator. He planned it, designed it, and then created it. It is like the knowledge of an engineer of the car. He is the one who designed the car before production. He does not need to study the car after it is produced because he is the one who produced it. Allah’s knowledge precedes existence, but human knowledge succeeds it.

In Arabic, empirical knowledge is called *hissiyyāt* (perceptions), rational knowledge is called *‘aqliyyāt* (intelligibles), reported knowledge *naqliyyāt* (narrations), and spiritual knowledge *kashfiyyāt* (unveiled knowledge) and also *wijdaniyyāt* (inner experiences). Empirical, rational, and reported knowledge are objective and binding, while spiritual knowledge is subjective and non-binding. From the multiplex epistemology perspective, these are not mutually exclusive. They do not negate each other; on the contrary, they complement each other. We, human beings, have all these faculties and capacities, and multiplex epistemology helps us to operate with all of them, but we need to know where each knowledge is appropriate to use, as you have seen in the example of the court. In the court, a certain type of knowledge is appropriate; in your personal life maybe some other type of knowledge is appropriate.

4. Levels of Certainty in Knowledge

Accoording to multiplex epistemology, there are three main levels of certainty in knowledge. If knowledge is completely certain, it is called *yaqīn*. If it is probable, it is called conjecture *(zann)*. If it is less than *zann*, it is called doubt (*shakk)*. If it is not certain at all, it is called illusion *(wahm)*. In life, very few things are completely certain. We mostly rely on *zann* in our lives. Multiplex epistemology accepts different types of knowledge based on three different levels of certainty. These levels are called 'certainty by knowledge' (*'ilm al yaqīn),* 'certainty by witnessing' *('ayn al-yaqīn)*, and 'certainty by experience' *(haqq al-yaqīn).*

How certain are you that Zanzibar exists? If you have not been to Zanzibar but know that it exists from books or hearing from others, your knowledge about its existence is called 'certainty by knowledge' (*'ilm al-yaqīn).* If you see Zanzibar from an airplane, your knowledge about its existence is called 'certainty by witnessing' (*'ayn al-yaqīn)*. If you have been to Zanzibar, your knowledge about its existence is called knowledge by experience *(haqq al-yaqīn).*

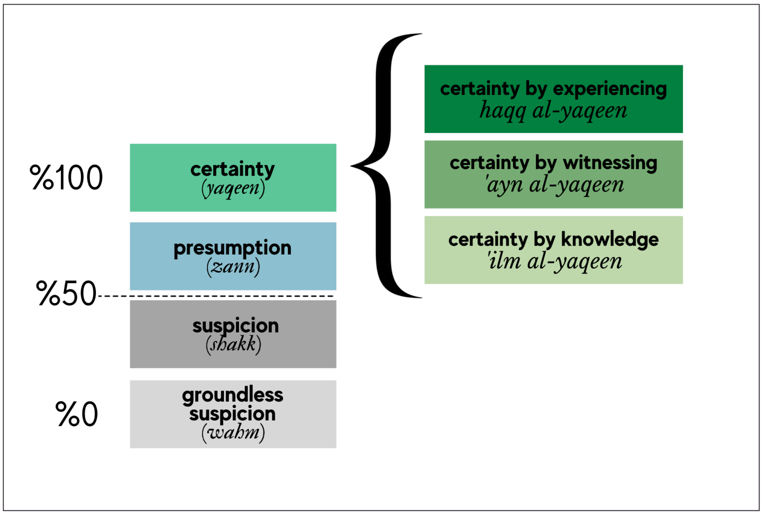
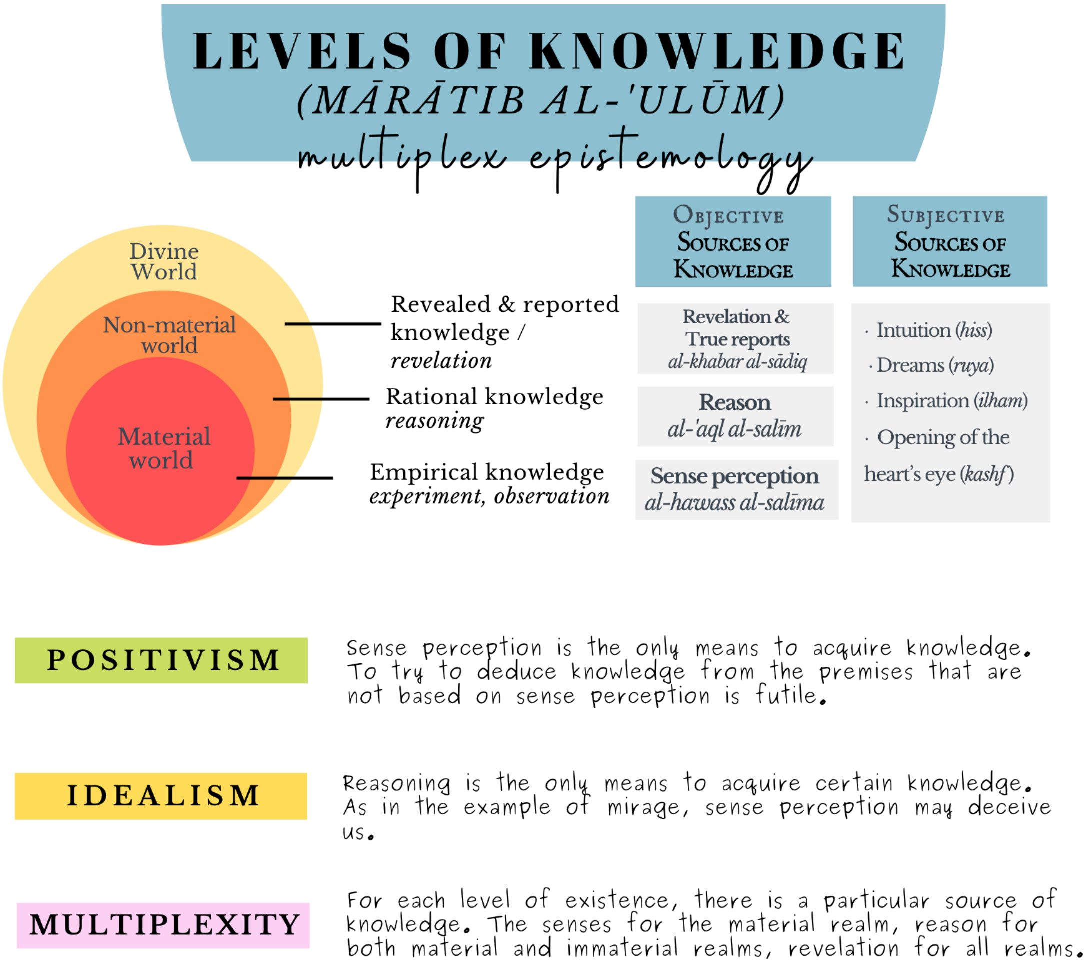

%100
%50
%0
certainty
(yaqeen)
presumption
(zann)
suspicion
(shakk)
groundless suspicion
(wahm)
certainty by experiencing
haqq al-yaqeen
certainty by witnessing
'ayn al-yaqeen
certainty by knowledge
'ilm al-yaqeen

Figure 2.2: Levels of certainty in multiplex epistemology


LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE
(MĀRĀTIB AL-'ULŪM)
multiplex epistemology
Divine World
Non-material world
Material world
Revealed & reported knowledge / *revelation*
Rational knowledge *reasoning*
Empirical knowledge *experiment, observation*

OBJECTIVE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE	SUBJECTIVE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE
Revelation & True reports *al-khabar al-sādiq*	· Intuition (*hiss*) · Dreams (*ruya*) · Inspiration (*ilham*) · Opening of the heart's eye (*kashf*)
Reason *al-'aql al-salīm*	
Sense perception *al-hawass al-salīma*	

POSITIVISM Sense perception is the only means to acquire knowledge. To try to deduce knowledge from the premises that are not based on sense perception is futile.

IDEALISM Reasoning is the only means to acquire certain knowledge. As in the example of mirage, sense perception may deceive us.

MULTIPLEXITY For each level of existence, there is a particular source of knowledge. The senses for the material realm, reason for both material and immaterial realms, revelation for all realms.

Figure 2.3: Comparison between positivist, idealist, and multiplex epistemology

Summary

- Positivists believe that sense perception is the only legitimate source of knowledge and that knowledge is objective.
- Idealists believe that reason is the only legitimate source of knowledge.
- Multiplex scholars believe that sense perception, reason, reported knowledge, intuition, dreams, and *kashf* are all sources of knowledge that can be used in different domains. They also believe that there is both objective and subjective knowledge.

- Multiplex scholars believe that there are three main levels of knowledge, namely *‘ilm*, *‘irfan*, and divine knowledge.
- Multiplex scholars believe that there are three main levels of certainty in knowledge, namely certainty by knowledge, certainty by witnessing, and certainty by experience.

Key Words

marātib al-’ilm or **multiplex epistemology:**	multiplex scholars classify sources of knowledge into two categories, objective and subjective. Objective sources of knowledge include sense perception (*al-hawās al-salīma*), sound reason (*al-’aql al-salīm*), and revelation or reported knowledge (*al-khabar al-sādiq*). Subjective sources of knowledge include intuition, dreams, and inspiration or spiritual illumination (*kashf*).
***a priori* knowledge:**	It is also called self-evident knowledge. It is knowledge that is independent of all particular experiences. It does not need any proof. A *priori* knowledge is called *badīhī* or *dharūrī* in Arabic.
***a posteriori* knowledge**:	knowledge derived from experience.
objectivity:	a characteristic of scientific claims, methods and results. It expresses the idea that the claims, methods and results of science are not, or should not be influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions.
subjectivity:	being based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions.

Dig Deep

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Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

Focus Questions

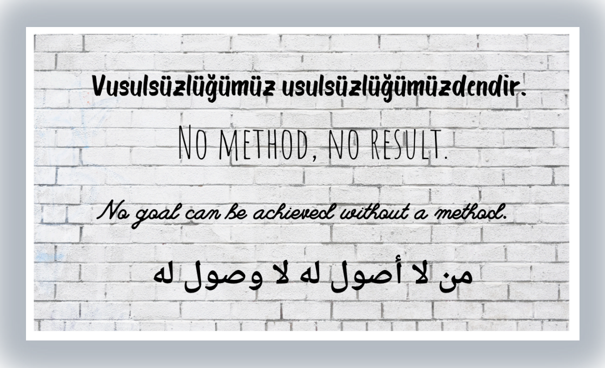
- ◊ What is methodology?
- ◊ What is the difference between methodology and methods?
- ◊ What are the different methodological approaches that guide research?
- ◊ What are the different methods to collect and analyze data?
- ◊ What is multiplex methodology and why is it important?
- ◊ Why are there multiple methods rather than a single method?
- ◊ Can you study every domain of existence with a single method?
- ◊ What are the methods used by multiplex methodology?

In the previous two chapters, you have learned about two philosophical disciplines, namely ontology and epistemology. You have also learned that both have a crucial role in determining your methodology in social research. Thus, you are already aware that both your ontology and epistemology determines your methodology, and your choices regarding methodology determines your decisions about practical methods which ultimately shape your research and theory. In this chapter, you will learn the details of methodology and different methodological positions. The study of methodology will provide you with the necessary training to choose your research techniques and strategy relevant to the issue that you are studying. Conducting research without a method is like travelling in a forest without a map and compass. How do you know which method(s) is/are most appropriate for your research? Methodology guides research from the choice of a research question and data collection to the analysis of the data and theorizing about the findings. Every phase in research also requires mastering research techniques. Insufficient knowledge of methodology may result either in the failure of research or a waste of resources. Methodology, thus, helps you choose the proper methods for the issue under investigation. Otherwise, you may end up applying irrelevant methods in your research, which will provide you with inaccurate results.

1. What is methodology?

'What is your methodology?' is the second most frequent question that people will ask you during your academic career, after the question of 'what is your research topic?' It is also, probably, the most important one. The reason for that is because it is also possible for ordinary people to talk about your research topic, ask the same questions, and provide answers for them. What distinguishes ordinary thinking from scientific or academic thinking is having a method.

Methodology, in simple terms, is the study of methods applied to an area of study. Due to this intimate relationship between methodology and methods, they are frequently conflated with each other. Another example similar to this is the conflation between the terms 'technology' and 'technique.' Almost all of us use the term 'technology' to mean 'techniques," but technology literally means the study of the techniques. In the same way, methods are specific techniques and procedures to be used in a research project, while methodology is the systematic study of these techniques and procedures. It allows one to proceed systematically through the evidence. C. Wright Mills (1916-1962), an American sociologist, also illustrates the difference between methods and methodology as follows:



Vusulsüzlüğümüz usulsüzlüğümüzdendir.

NO METHOD, NO RESULT.

No goal can be achieved without a method.

من لا أصول له لا وصول له

> Methods are the procedures used by men trying to understand or explain something. Methodology is a study of methods; it offers theories about what men are doing when they are at work at their studies. Since there are many methods, methodology tends necessarily to be rather general in character and, accordingly, does not usually -although of course it may- provide specific procedures for a man at study. Epistemology is still more general than methodology, for its practitioners are occupied with the grounds and the limits, in brief, the character, of 'knowledge' (Mills 1959: 57-8).

After highlighting the line between these two concepts, now let's go over the different methodological approaches that are most frequently used in human and social sciences and see how different theoretical perspectives and assumptions of a researcher determine his or her methodological approach.

2. Different Methodological Approaches

All research methods and theories in social sciences and humanities make some methodological assumptions about what constitutes scientific and valid research. Yet the issue of **validity** of a social science research is highly contested. Scholars give different answers to the methodological question of 'What is/are the method(s) to be used in social sciences that make(s) research valid?' Some scholars say that, since there is no ontological difference between nature and society, the same methods used in the study of nature should be used when studying society. Therefore, there is a universal scientific method. Some others claim that nature and society are ontologically different entities which should be studied through different methods. For still others, a different method should be used for each level of existence. These are the three major different methodological approaches used in social sciences and humanities that guide researchers in choosing appropriate methods to gather and analyze data related to their hypotheses and research questions. They are namely:

- Positivist methodology
- Idealist methodology
- Multiplex methodology

Section A.
POSITIVIST AND IDEALIST METHODOLOGIES

1. Positivist Methodology: Explanation

In the first chapter, you learned that positivist ontology asserts that social facts have a physical and objective reality just like the natural world around us. Social reality does not change depending on the culture or time, it is universal, and it waits ‘out there’ independently of human subjectivity to be discovered. That is, positivism defines society as a system consisting of social phenomena that come together in causal relationships. In the second chapter, you realized that this ontological conception leads to an epistemology which maintains that the knowledge of the social world is also objective, value-free and exists independently of the subject. Based on these ontological and epistemological assumptions, positivist methodology holds that the same methods used in the study of nature should be used when studying society. Therefore, positivist methodology argues for a unity of the sciences (Comte 1877: 332; Durkheim 1903: 178) which means that the study and explanation of the social world should be through the method of the natural sciences. The universal scientific method is appropriate for both fields of study. Whether you study human beings or stones, the scientific method is universally applicable.

Positivist methodology aims to uncover the universal **laws** of human actions and social phenomena across various settings and contexts. These laws can be discovered by the collection of objective facts about the social world in a statistical form, by the careful analysis of these facts, and by repeated checking of findings. To that end, positivist methodology upholds 'an organized method for combining **deductive logic** with precise empirical **observations** of individual behavior in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to **predict** general patterns of human activity' (Neuman 2003: 71). Since true knowledge is based on the experience of the senses, these universal laws can only be discovered through observation and experiment, and the discovery of these universal laws and the **explanation** of human action and social phenomena help to predict future instances.

The core of the scientific method of the positivist methodology is first to form questions, or **hypotheses**, and then to obtain the knowledge through **observations** and **experiments** to either support or disprove a specific theory. The concepts that signify phenomena are considered as **variables** and the causal relationship among these variables are explored. You first assume a relationship between certain variables, which forms your hypothesis, then you look at specific instances to test the validity of the assumed relationship. In other words, you do not start with collecting data and then continue with forming a general principle according to the data collected, but start with forming hypotheses in which you assume a certain relationship between variables, then you collect data to test your hypothesis. This sort of "general to specific" approach is identified as **deductive approach**.

Thereby, positivist methodology tends to employ **quantitative** methods which ensure objective measurement and reliability by generating numerical data. Quantitative data comes from the word quantity, indicating amount. It is a measure of something: number, size, etc. (e.g. On a scale from 1 to 5, how happy did you feel last week?) As such, only measurable data are being gathered and analyzed in quantitative research. Quantitative research makes the use of tools such as **questionnaires**, **surveys**, **experiments**, and **measurements** to collect numerical or measurable data. The idea behind quantification is that it produces value-free judgments. In fact, the idea of creating a methodology with clear procedures and principles is the embodiment of the necessity to make the social sciences more objective in the eyes of the public.

In a nutshell, positivist social research aims to explain the causal relationships between social phenomena by testing the hypotheses, and to generalize the findings, therefore to uncover the universal social laws regulating the social life that are independent of culture and time, and ultimately to make prediction possible regarding future events. Hereby, positivist methodology can be summarized in the following points:

1. All sciences share the same methodology: Social events and phenomena can be explained through the methodology of natural sciences.
2. Certainty, not probability, is the goal of scientific research.
3. Experiments should be replicable and verifiable.
4. First form questions, or **hypotheses**, and then acquire the knowledge through **observations** and **experiments** to either support or disprove your theory.
5. The hypothesis must assume a relationship between certain variables as in the following sentence: "The increase in X causes increase in Y."
6. Data of the specific instances should be collected to test the hypothesis and see whether the increase in X causes increase in Y.
7. If proven to be true, then the researcher accepts the fact that "the increase in X causes increase in Y" as a general theory or law.

2. Idealist Methodology: Interpretation

Contrary to the positivist paradigm, idealist methodology is based on the assumption that nature and society cannot be studied through the same methods because nature and society are ontologically different entities. The methods to study society should be interpretive unlike the methods applied in the natural sciences, since there are no universal laws and no causal relationships between social events and phenomena that are independent of culture and time. The purpose of the research involving interpretive methods is to **understand** (*verstehen*) how people conceive, experience, interpret and construct the social world, not to explain or discover the laws behind it. Since reality can never be objectively observed from outside, as a result, it must be observed from inside through the direct experience of the people.

Social reality which is created by the intentional actions of social actors is in a constant change depending on the culture and time. Therefore, it cannot be generalized and predicted, but can only be interpreted. Accordingly, the research does not start with a predetermined hypothesis or theory. It starts with a question such as “what does X mean to those who experience it?”. The research aims to understand and see X from the point of view of those who experience it through empathy. Thus, the researcher directly interacts with the people in his sample. If the findings provide him with enough evidence to indicate a certain tendency, then the researcher attempts to develop a hypothesis or a theory in the light of the specific instances. This type of "specific to general" approach is identified as **inductive approach**. Interpretivist methodology is mainly characterized by **qualitative** methods such as observations, discourse analysis, and interviews.

> [Sociology is] ... the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of social action and thereby give a causal explanation of the way in which the action proceeds and the effects which it produces. By ‘action’ in this definition is meant the human behaviour when and to the extent the agent or agents see it as subjectively meaningful... the meaning to which we refer may be either (a) the meaning actually intended either by an individual agent on a particular historical occasion or by a number of agents on an approximate average in a given set of cases, or (b) the meaning attributed to the agent or agents, as types, in a pure type constructed in the abstract. In neither case is the ‘meaning’ thought of as somehow objectively ‘correct’ or ‘true’ by some metaphysical criterion. This is the difference between the empirical sciences of action, such as sociology and history, and any kind of a priori discipline, such as jurisprudence, logic, ethics, or aesthetics whose aim is to extract from their subject-matter ‘correct’ or ‘valid’ meaning.
>
> — Max Weber, *The Nature of Social Action*, 1922.

Consequently, if you aim to find out the answer to an inquiry through statistical and numerical evidence, then you should make use of the quantitative methods such as polls, questionnaires, and surveys. But, if you wish to understand why a particular event happened, or what a specific phenomenon or event means to people, then you should make use of qualitative research.

Now, let’s continue with the third alternative approach to methodology, namely multiplex methodology.

Section B.

MULTIPLEX METHODOLOGY

MARĀTIB AL-USŪL

In the previous section you learned what methodology is. We have first asked the question: what is methodology? Then we presented two types of methodology, namely materialist methodology and idealist methodology. Materialists argue that we can learn about the external world through empirical methods because they assume that everything can be observed and measured. Idealists argue that we can learn about the external world through reasoning because they assume that everything exists in our minds and can be understood rationally.

In this chapter you are going to learn about another type of methodology, namely 'multiplex methodology,' which is called *'marātib al-usūl'* in Arabic. This multiplex view opposes the positivist and idealist reductionism of methods to a particular level and acknowledges that there are methods appropriate to each level of existence. At one level, knowledge can be acquired through empirical methods, at another level it can be acquired through reasoning - pure or religious - and at the third level it can be acquired through other methods such as purification of the self *(tasfiyah* or *tazkiyah).*

3. Multiplex Methodology: Reasoning (*Nazar*) and Purification of the Self (*Tasfiyah*)

Positivists believe that there is a single scientific method applicable to everything. They argue that if there is something that cannot be studied with this scientific method, it should simply be excluded from science. Idealists also believe that if something cannot be studied by interpretive methods, it is outside of the domain of scientific research.

In contrast, multiplex scholars believe that there are different types of scientific methods suitable for each level of existence.

As you can see, multiplex ontology (*marātib al-wujūd*) requires multiplex epistemology and methodology (*marātib al-usūl*), which culminates in multiplex truth (*marātib al-haqāiq*). Multiplex truth is a reflection of a multilayered worldview and understanding of reality. According to this view, what might be true at a particular level of existence may not be true at another one. An example of this is gravity. You know that gravity exists in the physical world. Do you think it also exists in the spiritual world? No. This leads us to multiplex truth. Something that is true at one level of existence should not be projected to other levels, because truth varies from one level to the other. It also varies at the same level of existence: for example, what is true on Earth may not be true on Mars or on another planet.

Here is a more detailed explanation of this: we have seen before that there are three levels of existence according to multiplex scholars. This is what we call multiplex ontology. This multiplex view of reality requires multiplex epistemology. As you know, knowledge about the divine world is gained through revelation, about the non-material world through reason, and about the material world through sense perception. The first is called spiritual knowledge, the second rational knowledge, and the third empirical knowledge. You can see that multiplex epistemology combines three levels of epistemology depending on the corresponding level of existence. The same thing is true for methods. We need to have a method suitable for each level of existence. One of the methods is empirical research, another method is reasoning (pure reasoning and religious reasoning), and a third method is purification of the self which is called *tasfiyah*. Purification of the self culminates in what we can call 'spiritual unveiling' *(kashf).* Each of these methods is appropriate for one or more levels of existence. Purification of the self, for instance, is not the appropriate method to study physics or chemistry or biology, but it is the most appropriate method for the spiritual world. Empirical methods, on the other hand, are suitable to study chemistry, biology, and physics but are not appropriate for studying the spiritual world. From this perspective, those who accept multiplex methodology are not rejecting positivist or idealists methods, but are using them in an integrated manner depending on the subject they are studying.

know that

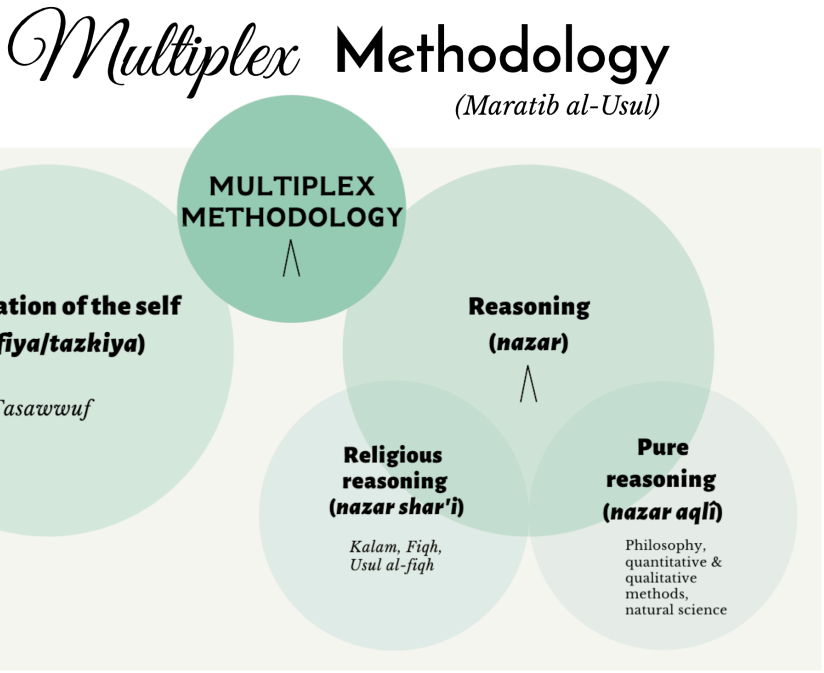
When we say that multiplex scholars use a particular method at a particular level of existence, we do not mean that they use only that one method, but they privilege it over other methods at that particular level. They usually combine different methods in an integrated way.

Multiplex methodology helps us overcome the limitations of idealist and positivist methodologies. Positivist methods are good to understand physical reality, and idealist methods are good to understand the immaterial and abstract reality. But when it comes to other levels of existence, they have limitations.

Societal scientists study social action, and as you know, human action is produced by human beings. A human being with his body, mind, and soul together produces a social action. Societal scientists should take all of these components into account. Social action has a visible and an invisible side. The visible side can be studied using empirical methods, but the invisible side requires using other methods. In order to study both aspects of social action, a more holistic method is needed. If a positivist wants to measure someone's IQ for example, he will study the person's brain and its components. An idealist would rather focus on psychological factors. But a multiplex scholar would study both the physical dimension and non-physical dimension of the IQ and try to understand it in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

This multiplex approach is adopted and used by different thinkers and scholars around the world, but here we are focusing on the multiplex approach developed and used by Muslim scholars because we believe it to be more sophisticated compared to other methodologies developed by other thinkers in other civilizations.

In the Islamic academic and intellectual tradition, there is a great Ottoman scholar whose name is Tashkoprīzāde (1495-1561). In his book *Mawdu'āt al-'Ulūm*, which can be translated as 'Subjects of Disciplines,' he argues that there are two main methods to acquire knowledge. The first method is called *'na⍰ar'* and the second *'tasfiyah'* (Tashkoprīzāde 1985: V. 1).



Multiplex Methodology
(Maratib al-Usul)
MULTIPLEX METHODOLOGY
Purification of the self (tasfiya/tazkiya)
Tasawwuf
Reasoning (nazar)
Religious reasoning (nazar shar'i)
Kalam, Fiqh, Usul al-fiqh
Pure reasoning (nazar aqlî)
Philosophy, quantitative & qualitative methods, natural science

Figure 3.1: Multiplex methodology

Na⍰ar means reasoning, theorizing, or thinking, and *tasfiyah* means self-purification. *Tasfiyah* is also called *tazkiyat al-nafs*. According to Tashkoprīzāde, these methods are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they should be used together because they complement each other. This is what distinguishes the multiplex approach from positivist and idealist approaches.

There are two types of reasoning *(na⍰ar)*, namely pure reasoning and religious reasoning. You need pure reasoning or secular reasoning to have a conversation with secular people or materialist people. This type of reasoning is mainly used in philosophy and natural sciences. If you are studying nature, laws of physics, or biology, you can use pure reasoning, because at the material level of existence, your focus is on material phenomena and their causal relations. As for religious reasoning, it is mainly used in disciplines such *kalām* and *fiqh*.

Both pure reasoning and religious reasoning are objective and rational. By objective, we mean understandable and acceptable to everybody. It does not mean that everyone will accept it; what we mean is that there is a possibility that they accept it. In the public sphere arguments may be built using pure reasoning because it is the universal common ground among people from various religious and cultural backgrounds. Rawls also argues that we have to rely on reason in the public domain when we communicate with people from diverse political, moral, and religious backgrounds.

According to Rawls, argumentation in the public domain requires rationalization by justifying a particular position in such a way that it would be convincing to people from different moral, cultural, or political backgrounds. Rawls argues that this is the only way effective communication in a diverse society is possible.

> ... a basic feature of democracy is the fact of reasonable pluralism- the fact that a plurality of conflicting reasonable comprehensive doctrines, 'religious, philosophical, and moral, is the normal result of its culture of free institutions.' Citizens realize that they cannot reach agreement or even approach mutual understanding on the basis of their irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines. In view of this, they need to consider what kinds of reasons they may reasonably give one another when fundamental political questions are at stake. I propose that in public reason comprehensive doctrines of truth or right be replaced by an idea of the politically reasonable addressed to citizens as citizens (Rawls, 1997: 766).

The role Rawls attributes to what he calls public reason completely excludes all other types of reasoning in a reductionist way, including religious reasoning. This is the difference between Rawl's uniplex approach and the multiplex approach. Rawls's approach eventually leads to a hegemonically constructed understanding of reason in the public sphere, but in the multiplex approach a pluralist approach to reasoning is adopted.

But ironically, even reasoning does not always lead us to the same conclusion. Two reasonable judges may disagree even though they follow the same procedures (Dare 2010). As long as they follow a proper methodology, their conclusions are respectable. Similarly, there is a lot of diversity of opinion within schools of *kalām* and schools of *fiqh* because reasoning does not always lead us to the same conclusion. Then the question is: why do we accept all these different conclusions as legitimate? The answer is: because they are the outcome of the same methodology. The common ground is the methodology, not the conclusion reached. In *kalām* or *fiqh*, the conclusions you reach are legitimate as long as you use a proper methodology. What unites the Muslim scholars are not the conclusions they arrive at but the methodology they use. This is very important. This allows for diversity of opinion about truth as long as it is backed up by a proper methodology.

know that

What unites the Muslim community (*ummah*) is not the conclusions they reach but the methodology (*usul*) they use.

The second method, Tashkoprīzāde mentions, is *tasfiyah,* which we have translated above as purification of the self. It is mainly used in *tasawwuf* and often culminates in what the Sufis call spiritual unveiling *(kashf)*. Knowledge acquired through spiritual unveiling is subjective and not based on rational argumentation. It is also different from inspiration. It is subjective in the sense that you do not expect other people to accept what you reached through spiritual unveiling as it is personal and experiential. This knowledge cannot be generalized and used as an argument in the public domain. For instance, in *kalām* and *fiqh* the knowledge acquired through *kashf* cannot be used as evidence.

Theoretical Reasoning (*nazar*)

Acqiured knowledge is gained through nazar in the following manner:

1. Apprehending the objects of perception with the external five senses
2. Drawing out the forms of these objects with the help of the imagination
3. Abstracting the intelligible meanings from these forms
4. Synthesis, analysis, and the setting of analogies

Purification of the Self (*tasfiyah*)

Divinely-given knowledge comes to the heart through cleaning the bad qualities of the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*):

1. Cleansing the heart from the impurities engendered by vices and adorning it with virtues
2. Then the heart becomes receptive to the breezes of compassion and flows of perfection emanating from the higher realms.
3. Spiritual illumination can shine in the heart.

Figure 3.2: A comparison between the two methods of multiplex methodology

Miftāḥ al-saʿāda wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyāda fī mawḍūʿāt al-ʿulūm

Tashkoprīzāde

The Fourth Introduction

On the Relationship between Theoretical Reasoning (*Nazar*) and Purification of the Self (*Tasfiyah*)

Know that: It is agreed upon that eternal happiness can only be achieved through knowledge (*ʻilm*) and action (*ʻamal*). There are two views on the relationship between the two, which are:

The first view: knowledge and action complement each other because knowledge without action is futile and action without knowledge is foolish. Allah Almighty says in the Qur’an: 'Good words ascend to Him and good deeds are exalted by Him' {29:69}.

The second view: each of the two –knowledge and action- is the fruit of the other. Action is the fruit of knowledge because when a person masters a specific knowledge they will necessarily act upon it, and any shortcoming in their actions is a sign of the imperfection of their knowledge. And knowledge is the fruit of action because if someone goes into action and struggles to perform it in the best possible way, their heart will be filled with perfected knowledge as stated in the following verse from the Qur’an: 'As for those who strive in Our cause, We will surely guide them to Our ways; rest assured that Allah is with the righteous' {29:69}.

These are two approaches. The first approach is referred to as theoretical reasoning (*naẓar*) or inference (*istidlāl*) and the second is referred to as purification of the self (*tasfiyah*) or spiritual illumination (*mushāhada*). The first is the level of well-grounded scholars, and the second is the level of men of truth and sincerity (*aṣ-ṣiddīqīn*).

Each of the two approaches culminates in the other, and he who masters both is referred to as ‘*Majma' al-Bahrayn*,' which can be literally translated as ‘the Mingling of the Two Oceans.'

You should know that despite the existence of an unlimited number of paths to acquire knowledge, there are only two types of Truth seekers:

The first type of Truth seekers start from the path of theoretical knowledge (*‘ilm*) towards spiritual enlightenment (*irfān*), or from the unseen (*ghayb*) towards the seen (*shahādah*).

The second type of Truth seekers are first drawn to their Creator through Divine attraction (*al-jazba al-ilāhiyyah*), a state in which Truth is manifested to them. They thus start from the unseen, and then knowledge about the seen is revealed to them.

Some Sufis say that the first type of Truth seekers may be exemplified by Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) because he inferred the existence of the Creator from the fading away of the sun and the moon. They also believe that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) might be an example of the second type because he has first been drawn to his Creator and was spiritually annihilated in Him until he ascertained that everything other than his Creator is mortal.

These are the two types of knowledge seekers who combine the two approaches, namely inference (*istidlāl*) and spiritual enlightenment (*mushahādah*).As for those who follow one way only, they differed from one another.

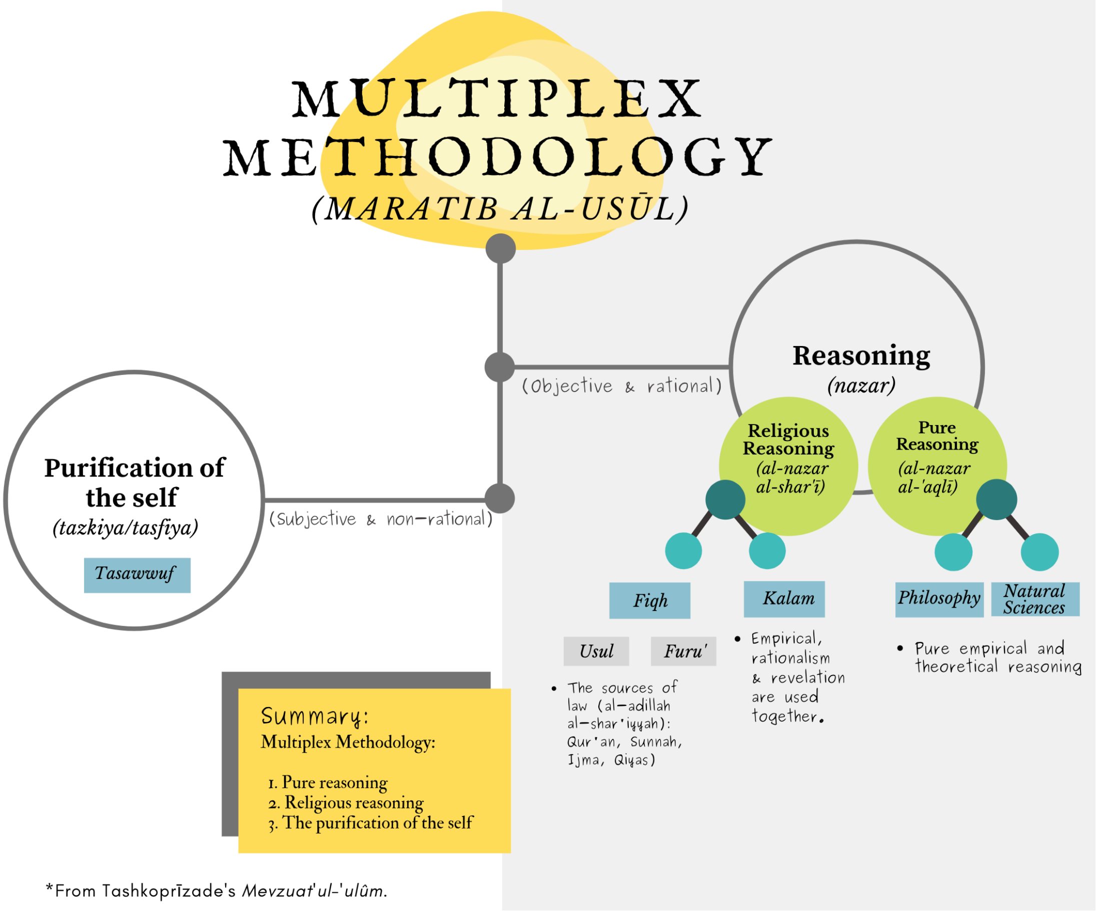
Philosophers say: the path of theoretical reasoning is better than that of purification and spiritual enlightenment because the latter is full of challenges and reaching its end is not guaranteed. This is the case because being freed from all worldly attachments to the extent of reaching the state of spiritual enlightenment is almost impossible, and even though one reaches that stage they have no guarantee to remain there because a single temptation would result in complete disconnection and loss of what was gained. In addition, the challenges and struggles encountered in the Path may cause mental illnesses.

Sufis say: knowledge gained through theoretical reasoning is often illusionary and imaginary. In addition, followers of this path often fall victim to their desires and habits in their quests unlike the Sufis -who follow the second approach - who keep purifying their hearts and await the manifestation of truth and divinely-Given knowledge. This path may be difficult and challenging, but the knowledge gained through it is certain and true. Moreover, it can be easy to those whom Allah has made it easy for those who follow the path of his prophets and saints. In addition, if a seeker happens to encounter mental problems on the way, they can easily be healed from it through proper observation of the rules and conditions of the Path because the Sufis are doctors not only of souls, but also of bodies.

There is a story about Roman and Chinese artisans who were ordered to engrave two walls that faced each other in the king’s palace. The Romans toiled in order to create masterly images, creative sculptures and unprecedented inscriptions. As for the Chinese artisans, they polished the wall facing the Romans. A lowered curtain separated the two walls. When the artisans’ task was over, the Chinese were told, ‘What did you achieve?’ They answered, ‘We perfected our work.’ They were asked, ‘Prove it to us.’ The curtain was lifted and the engravings of the Roman artisans, with all their statues, were reflected on the polished surface of the facing wall: more perfect in beauty and more truthful in its reflection.

> This is an example of the two approaches to knowledge. The first is acquired through the senses, whereas the second is divinely-given.
>
> Know that: the way to decide which approach among the two is the best depends on the discipline to which it is to be applied. Despite the unlimited number of disciplines, they can be classified into four categories because existence can be represented at four levels:
>
> 1. External physical existence (*wujūd fi al-a'yān*)
> 2. Mental existence (*wujūd fi al- adhān*)
> 3. Discursive existence (*wujūd fi al-lafz*)
> 4. Textual existence (*wujūd fi al-khat*).
>
> The disciplines related to external physical existence (*wujūd fi al-a'yān*), which is the first level of existence are the genuine disciplines that do not change over time. These disciplines are referred to as philosophical disciplines (*al-ulūm al-hikemiyyah*) if they are acquired through reason and as religious disciplines (*al-'ulum al-shar'iyyah*) if they are acquired through revelation.
>
> The disciplines related to mental existence (*wujūd fi al-dhihn*), which is the second level of existence are referred to as cultural auxiliary disciplines (*ʿulūm al-ʾaliyaʾal-ma'nawiyyah*). They include logic and similar disciplines.
>
> The disciplines related to discursive existence (*wujūd fi'l-lafz*) and textual existence (*wujūd fi al-khat*), which are the third and fourth categories respectively are referred to as oral and written auxiliary disciplines. They include Arabic Language disciplines.
>
> The last three categories -cultural, oral, and written auxiliary disciplines- can only be acquired through theoretical reasoning (*naẓar*). As for the first category, namely philosophical and religious disciplines, they can be acquired through either theoretical reasoning or purification of the self (*tasfiyah*).
>
> (Tashkoprīzāde 1985: V 1, 67-70)

To summarize, we can say that there are methods that produce objective knowledge and methods that produce subjective knowledge. In the multiplex approach, subjectivity and objectivity do not exclude each other. Rather, they are two levels to study the same reality. These methods are not seen as mutually exclusive. A good example for the multiplex use of these methods is Imam al-Ghazālī. When he writes a philosophy book, he uses pure reasoning. When he writes *kalām* and *fiqh* books, he uses religious reasoning. And when he writes a *tasawwuf* book, he uses *tasfiyah*. Another example is Mawlānā Jalāl al-din Rūmi. He was a *faqih* and a Sufi. The Mathnawi is a book he wrote from a Sufi perspective using *tasawwuf* methods. However, in the *madrasa*, he used religious reasoning in his teaching. A third well known example would be Ibn Khaldūn who was a *faqih*, theologian, historian, and Sufi. Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldūn, and Rūmī are good examples of Muslim scholars who applied multiplex methodology in their works.


MULTIPLEX METHODOLOGY
(MARATIB AL-USŪL)
Reasoning
(nazar)
(Objective & rational)
Religious Reasoning
(al-nazar al-sharʿī)
Pure Reasoning
(al-nazar al-'aqlī)
Purification of the self
(tazkiya/tasfiya)
Tasawwuf
(Subjective & non-rational)
Fiqh
Kalam
Philosophy
Natural Sciences
Usul
Furu'
• The sources of law (al-adillah al-shar'iyyah): Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma, Qiyas)
• Empirical, rationalism & revelation are used together.
• Pure empirical and theoretical reasoning
Summary:
Multiplex Methodology:
1. Pure reasoning
2. Religious reasoning
3. The purification of the self

*From Tashkoprīzade's *Mevzuat'ul-'ulûm*.

Figure 3.3: Multiplex methodology and disciplines

3.1. Causal Methods and Interpretive Methods

As we have discussed above, positivists rely mainly on empirical methods and idealists on rational methods to acquire knowledge. They believe that these methods are mutually exclusive. Multiplex scholars, however, use both empirical and rational methods in addition to religious reasoning and *tasfiyah*. They believe that there are methods appropriate to each level of existence.

Another distinguishing characteristic of multiplex approach is its combination of causal and interpretive methods in research. Causal methods are used to discover the web of the causal relations between cause and effect in nature, in society, and in language. They are mainly used by positivists. Interpretive methods are used to understand the meanings in nature, in society, and in language. They are mainly used by idealists.

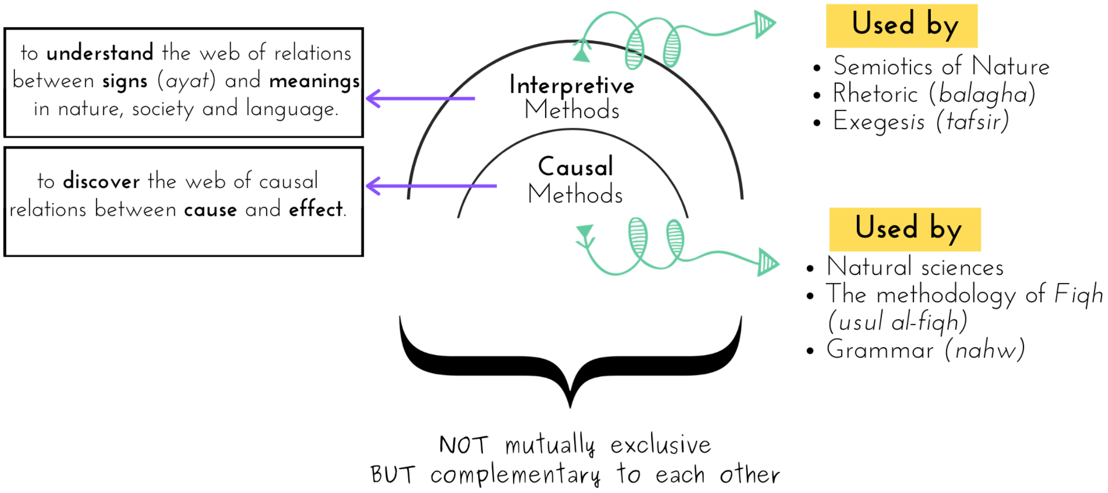

to **understand** the web of relations between **signs** (*ayat*) and **meanings** in nature, society and language.
to **discover** the web of causal relations between **cause** and **effect**.
Interpretive Methods
Causal Methods
Used by
• Semiotics of Nature
• Rhetoric (*balagha*)
• Exegesis (*tafsir*)
Used by
• Natural sciences
• The methodology of *Fiqh* (*usul al-fiqh*)
• Grammar (*nahw*)
NOT mutually exclusive
BUT complementary to each other

Figure 3.4: Causal and interpretive methods of multiplex approach

Multiplex approach combines both methods to study nature, society, and language. It studies meaning in nature by seeing everything in nature as a sign *(āyah)*. We talked about the example of the rose in the previous chapters. What is a rose? A rose may be seen as a sign to convey a meaning, but at the same time, it is studied in botany. When you study the meaning of rose, you use interpretive methods, and when you study how a rose grows, you use causal methods. These are not mutually exclusive, as positivists and idealists argue. Interpretive methods are used to understand semiotics of nature, Qur'an exegesis *(tafsīr)*, and the like. Causal methods are used in natural sciences, the methodology of *fiqh*, and grammar among others. These two methods mutually reinforce each other. Combining them helps in producing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

5 PILLARS OF THE MULTIPLEX APPROACH

1. **Objectivity is realized in subjectivity.**
2. Modes of thinking:
    - Spiritual level
    - Rational level
    - Sensual level
    - Brute thinking
3. Existence is realized as a **reality beyond itself** (*al-mana al-harfi*).
4. **Knowledge is virtue**, used for betterment of the self and society as opposed to knowledge for power.
5. Science is held as the **manifestation of a spiritual reality** as far as human ability.

Figure 3.5: Five pillars of the multiplex approach

	Uniplex	**First-level Multiplexity**	**Second-level Multiplexity**	**High-level Multiplexity**
Ontology	only one reality	material and spiritual realities	three levels of a single reality	three levels of a single reality
Epistemology	empirical or rational	empirical and rational	empirical and rational	empirical, pure rational, religious rational, *kashf*
Methodology	one method	one method exclusively for both realms	accepts different methods but uses only one for all levels	accepts different methods and applies them for appropriate realms
e.g.	Auguste Comte	Descartes	Al-Farabi	Ibn Khaldun

Figure 3.6: Levels of multiplexity

An Example for the High-level Multiplexity:

Fiqh
Kalam (Fiqh al-akbar)
Usul al-fiqh
Furu al-Fiqh
Tasawwuf (Fiqh al-batin)

Discipline	Ontological Focus	Epistemological Focus	Disciplinary Methodology
Philosophy	existence as a whole	reason	pure rational
Kalam	existence as a whole	reason revelation	religious rational
Furu al-Fiqh	external actions	reason revelation	religious rational
Tasawwuf	internal actions	*kashf*	*tasfiya/tazkiya* *purification of the self*

Summary

- Positivist methodology aims to uncover the universal **laws** of human actions and social phenomena across various settings and contexts.
- The core of the scientific method of the positivist methodology is first to form questions, or **hypotheses**, and then to obtain the knowledge through **observations** and **experiments** to either support or disprove a specific theory. This sort of "general to specific" approach is identified as **deductive approach**.
- Thereby, positivist methodology tends to employ **quantitative** methods which ensure objective measurement and reliability by generating numerical data.
- Contrary to the positivist paradigm, idealist methodology is based on the assumption that nature and society cannot be studied through the same method because nature and society are ontologically different entities. There are no such universal laws governing the social phenomena.
- The methods to study society should be interpretive unlike the 'scientific' method applied in the natural sciences, since there are no

universal laws and no causal relationships between social events and phenomena that are independent of culture and time.

- The purpose of research involving interpretive methods is to **understand** (*verstehen*) how people conceive, experience, interpret and construct the social world, not to explain or discover the laws behind it.
- An interpretivist research aims to understand and see X from the point of view of those who experience it through empathy. Thus, the researcher directly interacts with the people in his sample. If the findings provide him with enough evidence to indicate a certain tendency, then the researcher attempts to develop a hypothesis or a theory in the light of the specific instances. This type of "specific to general" approach is identified as **inductive approach**. Interpretivist methodology is mainly characterized by **qualitative** methods such as observations, discourse analysis, and interviews.
- Multiplex scholars believe that knowledge about the outside world can be objective or subjective depending on the level of existence studied.
- Knowledge about the material level of existence is mostly objective and can be gained through empirical methods.
- Knowledge about the non-material level of existence can be objective or subjective, and can be acquired using pure or religious reasoning (*naẓar*).
- Knowledge about the spiritual level of existence is subjective and can be acquired through purification of the self (*tasfiyah*).
- Positivists rely mainly on causal methods to understand and explain the outside world.
- Idealists rely on interpretive methods to understand and explain the outside world.
- Multiplex scholars use both causal and interpretive methods to understand and explain the outside world.

Key Words

hypothesis:	an idea or explanation that you test by looking at specific instances.
deductive approach:	moving from broad generalizations to specific observations.
inductive approach:	moving from specific observations to broad generalizations.
quantitative research:	one of two major approaches to collecting and analyzing data. It is used to test or confirm theories and hypotheses. It uses methods such as surveys, experimental research, obser-vational research.
qualitative research:	one of two major approaches to collecting and analyzing data. It is used to understand concepts, thoughts or experiences. It uses methods such as interviews, focus groups, case studies, discourse analysis.
verstehen:	a German term associated with Max Weber meaning empathic understanding of human behaviour, or understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view. It implies an interpretive or participatory examination of social phenomena.
***naẓar*:**	reasoning, thinking, or theorizing.

***tasfiyah*:**	(also called *tazkiyat al-nafs*) the process of purifying the self from impurities and adorning it with virtues.
***majma' al-bahrayn*:**	the mingling of the two oceans, an expression used metaphorically by Taşköprüzade to describe the scholars who combine *nazar* and *tasfiyah* in their pursuit of knowledge.

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MODULE 2

MODULE

2

CHAPTER 4
Origins and Historical Development of Disciplines

CHAPTER 5
Levels of Analysis and their Interrelations

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- understand how societies in the world address *is* and *ought* questions;
- have an idea of the function of societal sciences;
- understand that Western social sciences are not universal;
- appreciate that every civilization has its own societal science;
- understand the reasons why there are different societal sciences;
- have a comparative understanding of societal sciences in Western, Eastern, and Islamic civilizations;
- think critically about the levels of analysis and their interrelations;
- avoid logical fallacies when conducting research;
- differentiate between descriptive and normative modes of analysis.

Chapter Four

ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DISCIPLINES

Focus Questions

- ◊ What is the difference and relation between the universal category of "societal sciences" and "social science"?
- ◊ How do societal sciences emerge in different civilizations?
- ◊ Are Western social sciences universal? Or does every society have its own societal science?
- ◊ Why do we need societal sciences?
- ◊ What makes a social study scientific?
- ◊ Why are there different societal sciences? What differentiates them from each other?
- ◊ What differentiates social sciences from humanities in the West?
- ◊ How do sciences emerge and develop in a society?
- ◊ How did different disciplines emerge in the Islamic Civilization?

> *Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.*
> *-Kant*

In every civilization, questions emerge about social phenomena: "what is society?", "how should a society be organized?", "why do people do what they do?", "how are social institutions formed and what are their functions?", and "what motivates people to act in certain ways?". Every civilization needs to answer these questions. You can also understand these questions as social problems. Each society has developed a way to approach its social problems which are peculiar to itself. This distinctive way of dealing with social issues is shaped by the society's worldview. The worldview does not only lead the society to explain the social life in a specific manner, but it also keeps up its pursuit of knowledge. A body of knowledge accumulates around the social problems. When the society attains a certain level of development, this body of social knowledge becomes systematized and institutionalized. Finally, it turns into a special type of science that we call ***societal sciences***, a concept coined by Recep Şentürk (Şentürk 2017). Societal science is an umbrella term that represents a universal category to refer to knowledge systems about society in all world civilizations. To be more explicit, every civilization produces its own societal science with the purpose of explaining and regulating its social life.

Societal science is an umbrella term referring to the study of society and social phenomena in every civilization.

In other words, the worldview of each society determines its scientific tradition so that the society produces its own societal science. The societal science serves society to explain and order its social life. In Islam, this function is served by *fiqh* and its related disciplines. In Western Civilization, it is served by the category of disciplines called **social sciences**. *Fiqh* and social sciences functionally correspond to each other in explaining and regulating social phenomena, but are differentiated through their respective ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies. Simply put, they serve the same purpose through their own different ways.

Section A.
SOCIETAL SCIENCES IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION: SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Western society has its own societal sciences called *social sciences* and *humanities*. These disciplines reflect the Western historical experience and worldview beginning with Greek philosophy up until postmodernity.

- ✓ Western societal science is one among others. You should bear in mind that the social sciences of Western society are not universal because other societies also have developed systematic disciplines to address the same questions.

- ✓ Also, pay attention to the fact that the social sciences you study currently in many universities all over the world are a culturally specific product of the Western historical experience. Therefore, you should not be deceived that they are apt to explain and understand the social problems other societies face.

✓ You should understand that making sweeping generalizations can be misleading. For example, in the history of Western Civilization, societal sciences –called “social sciences” today– had different approaches. In fact, until the Renaissance period, there was no discipline called the humanities. In the same way, the study of society was called “social science” only after the 19th century. Therefore, in this book we make generalizations in order to refer to disciplines mainly as they are conceived after the developments in the 19th and 20th centuries.

> *Every civilization has a societal science which aims to explain and regulate social life. The societal science of Western civilization is social sciences. The societal science of Islamic civilization is fiqh and its related disciplines.*

1. Definition of Social Sciences

Social sciences are a group of disciplines that study social actions and relations between individuals, groups, and institutions for the purpose of exploring the reasons behind them.

Social sciences are a group of disciplines that study social actions and relations between individuals, groups, and institutions for the purpose of exploring the reasons behind them.

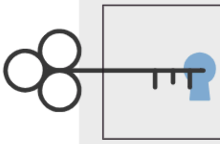
2. The Subject Matter of Social Sciences

The subject matter of social sciences is social action. Social action is a type of action which takes into consideration the existence of other people.

2.1. Relations between individuals, groups, and institutions

Human beings are social beings, so most of their actions are relations. These relations may take place between individuals, groups, and institutions. The types of relations and their level of analysis will be discussed in the next chapter.

Think of some examples of social actions. Is combing your hair before you go to meet your friends a social action? Or doing homework by your own at home? What do you think?



For the time being, start to reflect on what type of relations you have with your entourage. Are your relations mostly with individuals or institutions?

Scientific method: generating testable hypotheses in order to predict future outcomes and the ability to falsify these hypotheses.

For the purpose of exploring the reasons behind social actions: the main question that all social sciences try to answer is "why do people do what they do?" The Western society has developed its own way to approach its social problems. Because there are different views regarding the nature of being, there emerged different schools dealing with social theories. As you have already read in the previous chapters, these two main schools are positivism and idealism. Both positivists and idealists search for the reasons behind social actions. The positivists try to explore the causal explanation behind social actions while idealists seek for meanings and intentions attached to social actions.

Whether positivist or idealist, social researchers use the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of their scientific community. They do so to set their work into a scientific frame; in other words, they do so in order to render their social inquiry scientific. After the term social sciences was coined, the question "what makes a social study scientific?" became relevant.

3. Social Sciences: What Makes a Social Study Scientific?

The use of scientific method achieved great gains in the natural sciences. In the 19th century, with the rise of Positivism, the scientific method of natural sciences was transferred to the social field of inquiry. This time, the scientific method would be used to produce facts and falsifiable statements about the empirical world. Like the natural sciences, the social sciences would also aim to describe and explain the social phenomena, to identify scientific laws and achieve the predictability of human behavior. Starting from the 19th century, the use of scientific method in the social field became the criterion for studies on social action to be scientific. However, the social scientists discovered very soon that the scientific method in the social realm was not as successful as in the natural sciences (Kerr 2018). Afterwards, critical theories and idealists challenged this positivist way of doing social science. You will have the chance to read more about critical theories and idealism in subsequent chapters.

The extensive use of scientific method in the social sciences created some ethical issues in the 1960's and 70's. Many physical and emotional experiments conducted on human subjects were harmful. There is a second purpose of social sciences which is contested. The question is "should social sciences offer solutions for social problems and try to regulate them or not?" Some scientists advocate that, when there is a social problem like illiteracy, discrimination, racism, suicide, etc., they should seek to overcome it.

There is no definite answer for the question "What makes a social study scientific?" The criteria change from culture to culture, from civilization to civilization, and even from school of thought to school of thought. The ontology, epistemology and methodology play a major role in determining the criteria of what is scientific or not. There is no universal criterion to decide whether something is scientific or not.

If you are interested, you may learn more about the Stanford prison experiment. Here there is a short video on it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsWJPNhLCUU&list=RDQMj0Vqs1mTM34&index=2.

4. Social Sciences: IS or OUGHT?

Max Weber (1864-1920) is the most outstanding figure who argued on value-freedom (*Wertfreiheit*) in the social sciences. He, like many other social scientists, defended that social sciences must describe and explain **what it is**, rather than prescribe **what it should be**. The value-freedom is an ultimate "ideal" for social and cultural sciences, but in practice it cannot be achieved.

According to Weber, value-relevance affects the researcher's way of doing science. Values not only determine the choice of the subjects to study but also are influential on the construction of concepts. Value-relevance opposes the objectivity of sciences. Weber believes that the inquirer should be objective, and to be objective, they must try to be value-neutral. This is what Weber calls **value-freedom**. Before engaging in a study, they might be driven to choose the object based on their values, but when they are involved in data collection and evaluation, they must neutralize their values or, at least, should be aware that their values govern the selection and formation of the object of inquiry. This is what Weber calls **value-relevance** (Swedberg and Ola 2005: 364-367). Therefore, for Weber, complete value-freedom is an ideal difficult to achieve but value-relevance is an achievable goal.

Value-relevance is to select the objects of study and to make results out of research data in relation to values.

> ***But the true teacher will beware of imposing from the platform any political position upon the student, whether it is expressed or suggested.*** *"To let the facts speak for themselves" is the most unfair way of putting over a political position to the student. Why should we abstain from doing this? I state in advance that some highly esteemed colleagues are of the opinion that it is not possible to carry through this self-restraint and that, even if it were possible, it would be a whim to avoid declaring oneself. Now one cannot demonstrate scientifically what the duty of an academic teacher is. One can only demand of the teacher that he have the intellectual integrity to see that it is one thing to state facts, to determine mathematical or logical relations or the internal structure of cultural values, while it is another thing to answer questions of the value of culture and its individual contents and the question of how one should act in the cultural community and in political associations. These are quite heterogeneous problems. If he asks further why he should not deal with both types of problems in the lecture-room, the answer is: because the prophet and the demagogue do not belong on the academic platform. (From Weber's lecture at Munich University in 1918)*

The idea of value-free science has been subject to several critiques. One of the most cited critiques belongs to Alvin Gouldner (1920-1980). Gouldner rejects the principle of value-neutrality. He argues that value-freedom is "an account of a myth created by and about a magnificent minotaur named Max Weber." Gouldner argues that Weber aimed to preserve the autonomy of sociology from political control and this was the main purpose of his value-freedom doctrine. However, it served in the mid-twentieth-century other purposes of sociologists: to escape from public responsibilities (Hammersley 2005: 84):

> The value-free doctrine could have meant an opportunity for a more authentic morality. It could and sometimes did aid men in transcending the morality of their "tribe," to open themselves to the diverse moralities of un-familiar groups, and to see themselves and others from the standpoint of a wider range of significant cultures. But the value-free doctrine also had, less fortunate, results a well.
>
> Doubtless there were some who did use the opportunity thus presented; but there were, also, many who used value-free postulate as an excuse for pursuing their private impulses to the neglect of their public responsibilities and who, far from becoming more morally jaded. Insofar, as the value-free doctrine failed to realize its potentialities it did so because its deepest impulses were dualistic; it invited men to stress the separation and not the mutual connectedness of facts and values: it had the vice of its virtues. (Gouldner 1968: 204)

Weber's conception of value-freedom in social research has been very effective in the social scientific sphere. As a future social scientist, you will not be able to go around it while conducting your research; you will be forced to consider it and take a position.

Start, from the time being, to reflect on what type of researcher you want to be: a totally objective inquirer by eliminating your values, beliefs and feelings, or an inquirer who works in the service of society? What would be your choice: a descriptive science or a normative science? Please also consider if the society you are living in determines your choice? If you believe that it does, how and in what sense?

As you have seen above, social scientists have been working on social issues either from a descriptive or from a normative perspective. The debates on this issue in the Western tradition have a rich literature. For further discussions on value-free science, you may also have a look at Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and Robert K. Merton's (1910-2003) writings, and for its critics, you may be interested in the discussions of Leo Strauss (1899-1973), Dorothy Lee (1905–1975), and Charles Wright Mills (1916-1962).

Whether from descriptive or normative points of view, social scientists have adopted and focused on specific aspects of social phenomena. This led to the emergence of different disciplines among social sciences. At the beginning of the 21st century, sociology, psychology, communication, anthropology, business management, and international relations appear as separate and distinct branches which have their own departments within the Social Sciences and Humanities faculties of different universities all over the world. Each of these disciplines approaches social problems from its own disciplinary perspective.

Social sciences in the West assume the role of explaining and ordering social phenomena. These social sciences not only explain and order social life in the West but also in other societies all over the world. They produce knowledge on their own society by explaining it as civilization, progressive, and open to change, while non-Western societies are categorized as stagnant, despotic, backward, etc. The positivist claim is that the only function of social sciences is to explain, not to regulate social action. Nevertheless, the Western social sciences have been fulfilling an ordering function within its society and in the world. They regulate the society through law, social planning, and social engineering. Moreover, Western social sciences pretend that they have the mission to order non-Western societies as well. This idea found its most apparent expression in the civilizing mission (mission civilisatrice). (Şentürk 2017)

Some of the disciplines we acknowledge as social science today existed even before the term social sciences was coined. These disciplines existed since ancient times. They can be traced back to Ancient Greece, Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, and Ancient India. Political science and economics are among the disciplines which have their roots in the distant past. On the other hand, we also have some disciplines which emerged only in the 19th and 20th centuries. Socio-logy, psychology, communication, anthropology, business management, and international relations are new disciplines.

5. Social Inquiry between Homogeneity and Heterogeneity: Social Science or Social Sciences?

Discussion topic: Please read the following quotation from Immanuel Wallerstein (1930-2019) in his *The End of the World as We Know it: Social Science for the Twenty-first Century* (p.158-59). Think on the following questions and discuss them with your friends:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a specialized approach to social issues? What are the advantages and disadvantages of an integrated perspective on social problems?

When we turn to the analysis of the structures of knowledge, we find a situation that is not too different from the analysis of the political economy of the world-system. We have assertions of greater heterogeneity. Today, knowledge is divided into a multiplicity of disciplines, and each discipline has an ever-lengthening list of fields of interest, called specializations. Yet our knowledge structures seem to transcend many differences of space and time, and a defining characteristic of modern structures of knowledge has been the prominence, in fact the dominance, of the claim to the existence of universal knowledge, a claim that admits of no possible theoretical variation in what constitutes truth. Here too, we find no real consensus about whether homogeneity or heterogeneity is the preferred outcome. Indeed, the intensity of the contemporary so-called science wars and culture wars is clear proof of the depth of division within the scholarly world on this valuation.

Let us look at the International Sociological Association, itself the product of a several-centuries-long process of differentiation. When Machiavelli or Spinoza or even Montesquieu wrote their books, they did not call themselves sociologists; indeed, there was no such concept as "sociologist." Further, there was not even yet a clear distinction between such broader categories as "philosopher" and "scientist." This latter distinction, fundamental to the university system we have created in the last two hundred years, was initially an invention based on the Cartesian antinomy of humans and nature, one that became fully crystallized only in the late eighteenth century. The additional conceptual category of social science, as a third scholarly domain in between science and philosophy - or in university jargon between the faculty of natural sciences and what in some languages is called the faculty of humanities - emerged only in the nineteenth century, and separate university departments that distinguished between various social sciences came into existence only between the 1880s and 1945, an institutionalization that was fully consummated in many parts of the world only in the 1950s and 1960s.

Are sociology, psychology, economics, politics, communication, anthropology and business management different fields of inquiry with different interest and methods? Or is there a unique social science? Or is social science an umbrella linking multiple fields?

6. Social Sciences versus Humanities

In previous chapters, you have learned that science studies three domains: nature, society, and language. The sciences which study nature are called natural sciences, the sciences which study society are social sciences, and the sciences which focus on language are called humanities. This classification is not always definitive, because the disciplines under humanities are also concerned with society. The same is valid for social sciences; they also deal with the study of language as it is an integral part of social inquiry. You cannot conceive of the study of society without political discourse, religious discourse, and others. There is an overlap between the fields of social sciences and humanities. This is the reason that there is no consensus on which disciplines fall under social sciences or humanities.

Different questions in a society give rise to the emergence of social disciplines. What is economy and how should it be? What is politics and how should it be? Different methods may also lead to the birth of new disciplines. Some social and human issues require peculiar methods to for their investigation, as was the case for psychology. Thus, different questions and the need for different methods give rise to specialization in social disciplines. Despite the compartmentalization of social issues among different disciplines, these disciplines have overlapping interest, methods and even common sources. Think about Adam Smith, John Locke, Karl Marx, Max Weber, or any other prominent thinkers writing about social and human issues. Can you categorize them definitively as a sociologist or economist or political scientist? The borders between different social disciplines have been and still are fluid and shifting.

The humanities are a group of disciplines that concern themselves with human beings and their culture.

What is the field of humanities? Humanities are a group of disciplines that concern themselves with subjective human experience and its diverse expressions in language, literature, and **culture**.

Culture, in this definition, is the system of symbols used by a particular society to express ideas and communicate feelings and meanings. Humanities study the products of human culture. They interpret texts and artifacts. Literature, Philosophy, Ethics, Linguistics and Art are generally accepted as part of the humanities. Nonetheless, there are some disciplines which are contested: Law, History, Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Art. Are these disciplines part of the humanities or social sciences? What do you think?

In the past, there was a time when there was no divide between sciences (natural or social) and humanities. The divide between sciences and humanities became apparent in the 19th century. The division between the natural and social sciences on one side and the humanities on the other side is a complex issue. For centuries, this division between sciences and humanities has been subject to debate among scholars like Vico (1688-1744), Mill (1806-1873), Helmholtz (1821-1894), Dilthey (1833-1911), Windelband (1848-1915), Sarton (1884–1956), and Snow (1905–1980). Whether the divide was in use at the time or not, scholars pointed out the differences between the scientific and humanistic spheres in different instances. Each of them argued about the demarcation lines between fields within a specific intellectual agenda of the context. Up until the 19th century, the differentiation points between sciences and humanities were given high importance. The divide became operative only in the second half of the 19th century, especially with the rise of social sciences (Bouterse and Bart 2015).

Nomothetic science: an approach to science which presupposes that universally applicable scientific rules can be generated through the study and analysis of a large number of randomly selected cases.

How did these scholars contribute to the divide? Windelband emphasized the difference between natural sciences and humanistic disciplines by referring to the *nomothetic* and *ideographic* distinction. Natural sciences generate universally applicable laws from empirical experience, therefore they are nomothetic, while the humanistic disciplines focus on the study of the individual cases or events and therefore are idiographic. Dilthey contributed also to the comparison of natural and social/human sciences. The objects of natural study are measurable and they can be explained by causal analysis. Dilthey defined social sciences and humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) as the disciplines that investigate the expressions of the human mind. The subject of social and human sciences is the human being, thus they are self-conscious and self-motivated. They can be understood through their motives and linguistic and cultural means (Ross 2008: 216).

Idiographic science: an approach to science which presupposes that scientific knowledge comes through the evaluation of single events in their intrinsic complexity.

	Social Sciences	Humanities
Subject Matter	Social actions and culture	Culture
Methods	Explain or understand and predict human behavior	Understand meanings people attach to events and action
Sources	Empirical quantitative and qualitative data	Written texts, speech, artefacts, and symbols
Normativity	Normativity is debatable	Normativity is acceptable
Approach	Nomothetic	Ideographic
Aim	Explanation or Interpretation	Interpretation

Figure 4.1: Ambiguous division between social sciences and humanities

7. Origins and Historical Development of Western Social Sciences

When was the beginning of the Western social sciences? The answer is controversial. Some historians of science trace the roots of social sciences back to Plato. However, it is generally accepted that the social sciences emerged following the Enlightenment. Since the 17^{th} century, the economic, social, and political context in Europe has been challenged by revolutions. The result was economic crisis, migration to urban centers, social and economic inequalities, and imperial policies. Thus, a need for social sciences emerged.

Actual formation of the present disciplines in social sciences took place in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. For instance, prominent sociologists such as Durkheim and Weber and political scientists such as political scientists such as Woodrow Wilson, Charles A. Beard, and Charles E. Merriam published their key works in the early twentieth century.

The incorporation of statistical analysis into sociology by Emile Durkheim during the early 20th century may be considered a turning point in adopting and applying positivist methodology by social scientists in social scientific research.

Another turning point is the emergence of post-modernism, attacking the use of positivist methodology in the social sciences, a critique which emerged within the social science community influenced by the work of Thomas Kuhn on the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

Section B.

SOCIETAL SCIENCES IN ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

In the previous section, you have learned about the origins and historical development of social sciences in the West. As you have seen, the social sciences belong to the class of societal sciences which emerged within the Western civilization. In this section, we will move to societal sciences which specifically emerged in Islamic civilization. Muslim society like any other society sought answers to the question "Why do people do what they do?" This question leads to inquiry into the internal and external reasons for human behaviour. Hence, this quest led Muslims to produce their own societal sciences, which are the subject of this section.

You will, hereafter, explore the scientific process through which the Islamic society produced its own sciences. For this, we will use a theoretical and historical approach. We will follow Açıkgenç's theoretical scheme to reveal the origins and historical development of societal sciences in Islamic society (Açıkgenç, 2014). At the end of this chapter you will have an understanding of how a scientific tradition is formed within a civilization. After this theoretical-historical account, you will go through different Islamic disciplines to discover their differences and the relations between them.

1. Historical Development of Islamic Scientific Tradition

Before starting our journey into the Islamic scientific tradition, we want to draw your attention to the use of some expressions like "Islamic sciences" and "Islamic society." This term "Islamic" is used figuratively to express anything produced by Muslims or things expressly existing in the civilization that emerged after and on the basis of the religion of Islam. Therefore, the Islamic sciences to which we will refer in this section are the sciences produced by the Muslim society (Hodgson 1977). In this section, we will keep the term Islamic societal sciences for the sciences produced by the Muslim society in response to social problems. But, at the same time, we invite you to be cautious about the recurrent expressions in use that you may encounter in your further readings such as Islamic civilization and Islamic sciences. Now, we can have a look at the origins and development of the societal sciences in Islamic civilization by introducing some concepts.

Science is a disciplined and organized body of knowledge which occurs only in a certain social context as a product of a long historical process. The context to which we refer here is **civilization**. The prerequisite to have science in a society is the existence of a **worldview** that is appropriate for the scientific activities. This worldview leads to knowledge accumulation and forms a suitable environment for a scientific tradition to emerge. If the knowledge activities are pursued for a long period in a civilization, this yields to the emergence of a **scientific tradition**. The emergence of a scientific tradition in a society comes through and depends on a process that we call **scientific process,** which is a historical process leading to the emergence of sciences within a civilization. The scientific process develops and passes through stages gradually. Since at the beginning of this process there are no sciences yet, we can thus conveniently divide this process into two eras: Pre-Scientific Era and Scientific Era. The first three periods given below occur in the Pre Scientific Era and the rest in the Scientific Era. It is possible to observe also phases in each period, but for our purpose in this study we do not need to go into such details:

1. **Emergence of a worldview:** first a suitable worldview for knowledge activities emerges; this worldview should sustain the pursuit of knowledge activities.

2. Stage of problems: the learned people discuss questions which rise in the society. Their worldview enables them to explain and regulate the questions of the society. In this stage the learning activities begin to develop. At this stage a sophisticated tradition of knowledge must emerge in the respective civilization.

3. Stage of systematization and emergence of disciplines: when learning activities are pursued in a regular manner for a certain period of time, a body of knowledge accumulates. This body of knowledge is classified and methodology is formed. Around different subject matters emerges a discipline.

4. Further development of sciences: different schools of thought rise and continue their scientific activities. The persistent accumulation of knowledge ends up with a remarkable accumulation of knowledge. This leads to the appearance of new sciences and disciplines (Açıkgenç: 2014).

Having elaborated on the theoretical-historical scheme through which Muslims produced their sciences, we can turn our attention to the development of the Islamic scientific tradition. A scientific tradition drives its identity and character from the worldview on which it is based.

How did the worldview emerge in the Islamic society? What is the Islamic worldview? The foundations of the Islamic worldview were laid down in the Qur’an. We can formulate some features of the Islamic worldview as follows:

- **Belief in God:** Every being is created by one Omniscient and Omnipotent Creator known as God (*Allah*).
- **Man’s Moral Responsibility:** God chooses human beings as His vicegerents on the earth. Humans are thus entrusted with God's covenant as a Trust (*amanah*) which brings responsibility to them. This is the moral obligation that humans owe Him. The aim of this life is to live in accordance with that covenant to fulfill the responsibility so that they can take care of the Trust.
- **Resurrection:** Human beings will be brought back to questioning for such a responsibility through resurrection.

- **Prophethood:** Humans need guidance in order not to falter in their moral responsibility. God thus sent his messengers to guide them.

Meccan *suras*: the verses of Qur'an which were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) between 610-622. During these years, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) lived in Mecca, therefore the verses revelaed in Mecca have been called Meccan *suras*.

How did the Islamic worldview shape the scientific tradition? To answer this question you must know the function of worldviews. In everyday life when we do something we must know how to do it, so that knowing how to do things is accumulated in our mind in a systematic way. In our mind, if knowledge does not accumulate in an organized system, our mind cannot utilize that knowledge in everyday life. This means whatever we do in life we do according to the knowledge accumulated in our mind in a systematic order. It is this systematically organized knowledge which we call "worldview." Therefore, all our actions are carried out according to our worldview and our scientific activities are also included (Açıkgenç, 2014: 49-58).

Medinan *suras*: the verses of Qur'an which were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) between 622-632. These verses were revealed after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) migrated from Mecca to Medina (*hijra*).

Islam provides the main content of the worldview of the Muslim society; and this latter defines the relation of human beings with God. Therefore, early Islamic thought was heavily dominated by religious issues. But as time passed, Muslims faced new issues of a social and political as well as metaphysical and philosophical nature; this way they turned their attention to these issues and gradually issues discussed in Islamic learning activities became wider. Towards the end of the second century because of these tremendous and extremely widespread learning activities, there was a huge accumulation of knowledge which was collected in writing. At this moment, Muslims intellectuals began to classify this accumulation of knowledge and and realized that each class of knowledge constitutes an area of study which requires a specific method and theories. They named each class a special science, such as *tafsir*, *hadith*, *fiqh* (study of religion, human behavior and society), *kalām*, history (*ta'rîkh*) and grammar (*nahw)*. This is how sciences were born in Islamic civilization. This historical development is already called "scientific process" and later developments led to a very strong scientific tradition in the 3rd century of Islam (850-950). During this process, many other nationalities also entered into the fold of Islam, and they also brought their learning and tradition into this intellectual tradition. Among these, the most significant is the influence of the Greek scientific tradition.

The prominant Muslim scientist of history and society Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) also discusses this issue. Below, you will find an excerpt from his book.

> The prominent Muslim thinker, Ibn Haldun (1332-1406), at the beginning of his famous magnum opus *Muqaddima*h, states that the gathering of human beings in society is necessary and this is what the philosophers meant by the maxim: "Human being is social by its nature." God created human being in a form that it can only survive on sustenance. However human being's power is not enough to survive on its own, therefore, it is in need of collaboration with others. Living with others in society is a necessity and this is what Ibn Haldun calls umran. "When, however, mutual co-operation exists, man obtains food for his nourishment and weapons for his defense. God's wise plan that man (kind) should subsist and the human species be preserved will be fulfilled. Consequently, social organization is necessary to the human species. Without it, the existence of human beings would be incomplete. God's desire to settle the world with human beings and to leave them as His representatives on earth would not materialize. This is the meaning of civilization." (Rosenthal 88)

know that

The worldview of a civilization is always related to its scientific paradigm. In other words, the worldview is always shaped in accordance with the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of the learning tradition. As you have seen in the previous sections, the Islamic civilization has a multiplex ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The worldview is much related to the multiplex ontology and epistemology. The belief in the oneness of God (*Tawhid*) is very essential in multiplex ontology and it is also among the features of the Islamic worldview. In regard to epistemology, alongside with reason and sense perception, divine revelation, and *Sunnah* are accepted as sources of knowledge in the Islamic civilization. Qur'an and *Sunnah* are also sources for the worldview.

Sunnah: the life, practices and sayings of Prophet Muhammad. The life, practices and sayings of the Prophet were recorded and formed the *hadiths*. The *hadiths* are the literary expressions and context-specific accounts of the *Sunnah*.

2. Islamic Scientific Tradition

1. The Stage of Worldview (610-660's): The emergence of Islamic worldview already began with the revelation of Meccan verses (*suras*) in 610. It developed further along with the revelation of Medinan verses which was completed in 632. The Islamic worldview was exposed more in and by the life of the Prophet. Therefore, the *Sunnah* became the second source for the Islamic worldview.

2. Stage of problems (660-750's): The worldview which emerged from Qur'an and *Sunnah* was suitable for knowledge activities. There are many Qur'an verses which incite people to seeking knowledge (Açıkgenç 2001). "Amongst His servants, only the scholars are God-fearing". (35/*Fatir*, 28) "Are those who know, to be considered equal to those who do not know? Only prudent men reflect." (39/*az-Zumar*, 9) Thus, it led people to wonder what is going on in the society, how the family, economy etc. should be. So, the learned men and women began to deal with questions such as: "What is society?" and "How can we regulate society?" The worldview motivated the learned men and women to pursue knowledge, so learning activities were activated and a body of knowledge began to accumulate.

3. Stage of systematization and emergence of disciplines (750-950's): Qur'an and *Sunnah* already provided a substantial number of scientific concepts. Even if these terms were not used in a scientific sense by the Qur'an and *hadiths*, they took part in the worldview as fundamental concepts. Therefore, most of the terminology of the subsequent developments mainly in the fields of *kalām* and philosophy were contained in the Meccan *suras*. The terminology in the fields of law and political philosophy was developed in the Medinan period. Thus, from these concepts and further concepts produced by Muslims, a well-defined body of scientific concepts was formed.

Among these concepts, there is a concept which is an essential characteristic of the scientific tradition. It is the concept of method. The word used for this concept in the early Islamic scientific tradition is derived from the root *asl* which means "origin", "root." *'Usul* was at first used to mean principles from which something is derived. This meaning gradually acquired a more technical sense to mean the fundamental principles on which knowledge of a certain kind is based. This technical meaning emerged in between 700-950. For example, in language studies as it is used in expressions like *usul al-nahw*, it means methodology of grammar as a science. Then, the concept of method was further developed to express the science of method (methodology) between 900-1000. It becomes very common as *'ilm al-usul* and *'ilm usul al-fiqh*. (Açıkgenç, 2014)

Science is a disciplined knowledge which is a product of a long historical process which occurs only in a certain social context.

Meanwhile, accumulation of knowledge continued, and the accumulated knowledge was classified. Different disciplines emerged and were named, such as *fiqh*, *kalām*, history, political philosophy, grammar and linguistic sciences.

4. Further development of sciences (1000-1500's): different schools of thought rose and continued their scientific activities such as the schools of *Kawniyyat*, the Neo-platonic Aristotelians (*Mashsha'iyyun*) and *Tasawwuf*. The main scientific achievements of Muslims are found in this period. It is also in this period that Islamic scientific tradition began to diffuse globally and influence other civilizations, especially the Western civilization.

ISLAMIC SCIENTIFIC TRADITION

1 **Emergence of Worldview** (*Tawhid, Nubuwwah, Akhirah*) and Beginning of Knowledge Acquisition Activities (*Al –'ilm, al-fiqh; Quran and Sunnah)*

2 **Rise of Knowledge Tradition** (Some Companions and Successors)
(The rise of learning activities led to the rise of knowledge tradition)

3 **Rise of Systematizing**

4 **Naming Disciplines** (Language Studies, *Tafsir, Fiqh, Hadith, Kalam* and Sciences of Nature - *Kawn*)

5 **Further Development of Sciences**

6 **Rise of Commentaries**

7 **Revival and Synthesis**

8 **Decline and Intellectual Dependency**

3. Islamic Disciplines

By now, you have been familiarized with the historical process through which Islamic sciences passed. As you have seen above, already in the second century of the Islamic civilization, the accumulation of knowledge achieved such a point that different disciplines emerged. How did these disciplines emerge? Every society necessarily needs to solve its social and political problems and thus such questions as these arise necessarily: with regard to economic issues they ask, “What is economy?” “How does it work?” and “How should we regulate it?” These questions lead to the emergence of economy as an independent area of study which is then formed into a discipline.

From a poem by Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ṣabbān (d. 1206/1791):
The ten starting principles (*al-mabādīʾ al-‘asharah*)

1. The definition of the science (*al-ḥadd*);
2. Its subject matter (*al-mawḍūʿ*);
3. The goods that serve as the end of the science (*al-ghāyah*);
4. Its merits (*al-faḍl*);
5. Its relation to other sciences or its classification (*al-nisab*);
6. The founder of the science (*al-wāḍiʿ*);
7. The name of the science (*al-ism*);
8. Its sources (*al-istimdād*);
9. The legal ruling of learning the science (*ḥukm al-shāriʿ*); and
10. The questions investigated in the science (*al-masā’il*)

The same thing works also for political science. People keep asking: “What is a state?” and “How does a state govern the society?” and “How should a state govern for a better society?” People in a society raise questions and problems in regard to social phenomena. When the scholars of the society struggle to answer and overcome these questions and problems in a persistent and regular manner, a certain amount of knowledge is accumulated around certain subject matters with certain methods. This is how different societal disciplines form in a society. This process also took place in Muslim society. Around the investigation of different subject matters through different methods gave rise to disciplines in the Islamic scientific tradition.

ISLAMIC DISCIPLINES

Disciplines which use only
PURE RATIONAL METHODS (*nazar aqli*):
PHILOSOPHY

Disciplines which use
RELIGIOUS RATIONAL METHODS (*nazar shar'i*):
KALAM

Disciplines which study human action:
External dimension: ***FIQH AL-ZAHIR***
Internal dimension: ***FIQH AL-BATIN***

Disciplines which use *Nazar shar'i* and
TEXTUAL and NARRATIVE methods:
USUL AL-FIQH, USUL AL-TAFSIR **and** ***HADITH***

● **Methods**
● **Name of the Discipline**

Now you will have a very brief survey of Islamic disciplines. Let us concentrate on the most important and the very first disciplines which emerged in the Islamic civilization. For a general view, you may consult the different classifications of sciences within the Islamic civilization, but do not expect to find homogenous classifications, as there is also a broad variety of works accomplished on this subject which change depending on the historical context and aim of the Muslim thinkers. Let us first offer a simple classification based on the multiplex approach in our study. In this scheme, the disciplines are classified according to their methodologies (below you will read about these disciplines and their inter-relations). If you are interested you may also search for other thinker's classifications as well: Jabir ibn Hayyan, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Molla Lutfi, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldūn, Taskopruluzade, Katip Celebi and many others. You may want to look at the example that you can find at the end of this chapter.

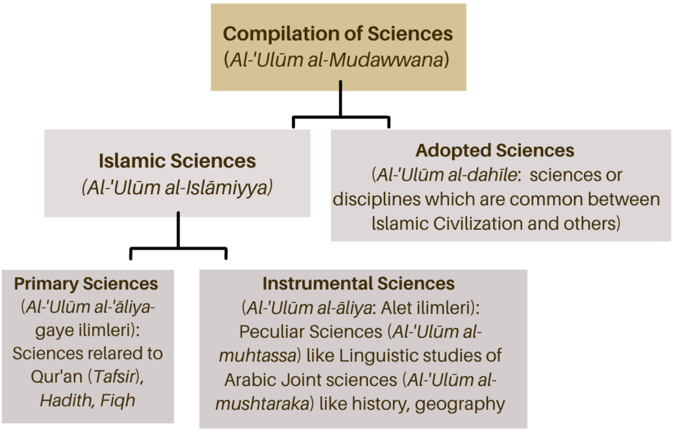

Compilation of Sciences
(*Al-'Ulūm al-Mudawwana*)
Islamic Sciences
(*Al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyya*)
Adopted Sciences
(*Al-'Ulūm al-dahīle*: sciences or disciplines which are common between Islamic Civilization and others)
Primary Sciences
(*Al-'Ulūm al-'āliya*-gaye ilimleri): Sciences relared to Qur'an (*Tafsir*), *Hadith, Fiqh*
Instrumental Sciences
(*Al-'Ulūm al-āliya*: Alet ilimleri): Peculiar Sciences (*Al-'Ulūm al-muhtassa*) like Linguistic studies of Arabic Joint sciences (*Al-'Ulūm al-mushtaraka*) like history, geography

Figure 4.2: Compilation of sciences

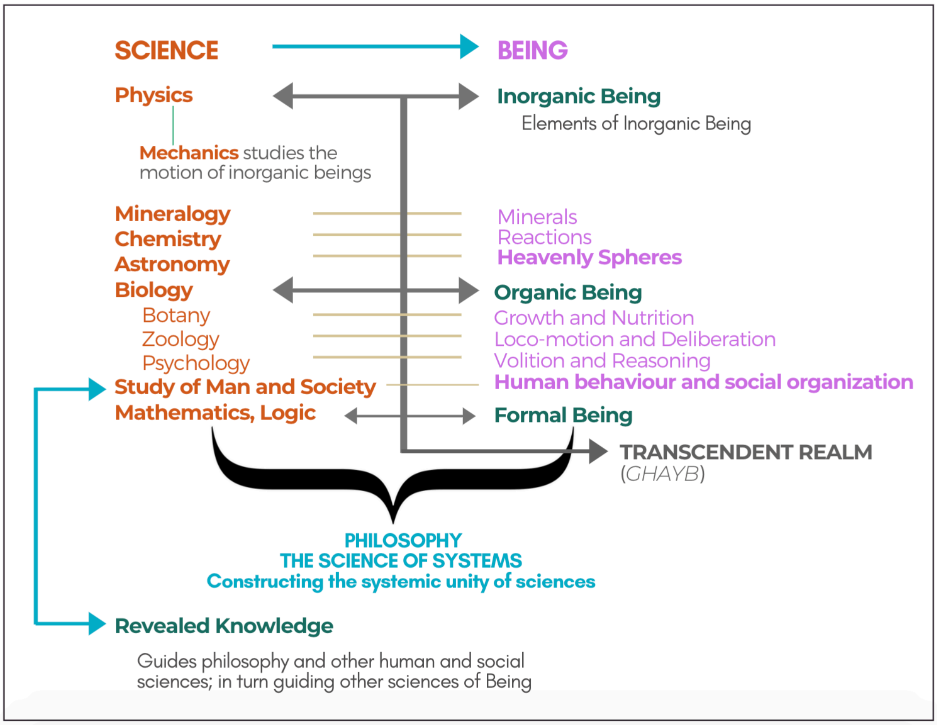

SCIENCE
BEING
Physics
Inorganic Being
Elements of Inorganic Being
Mechanics studies the motion of inorganic beings
Mineralogy
Chemistry
Astronomy
Biology
Botany
Zoology
Psychology
Study of Man and Society
Mathematics, Logic
Minerals
Reactions
Heavenly Spheres
Organic Being
Growth and Nutrition
Loco-motion and Deliberation
Volition and Reasoning
Human behaviour and social organization
Formal Being
TRANSCENDENT REALM
(GHAYB)
PHILOSOPHY
THE SCIENCE OF SYSTEMS
Constructing the systemic unity of sciences
Revealed Knowledge
Guides philosophy and other human and social sciences; in turn guiding other sciences of Being

Figure 4.3: Aristotle's classification of sciences compared to Islamic multiplexity

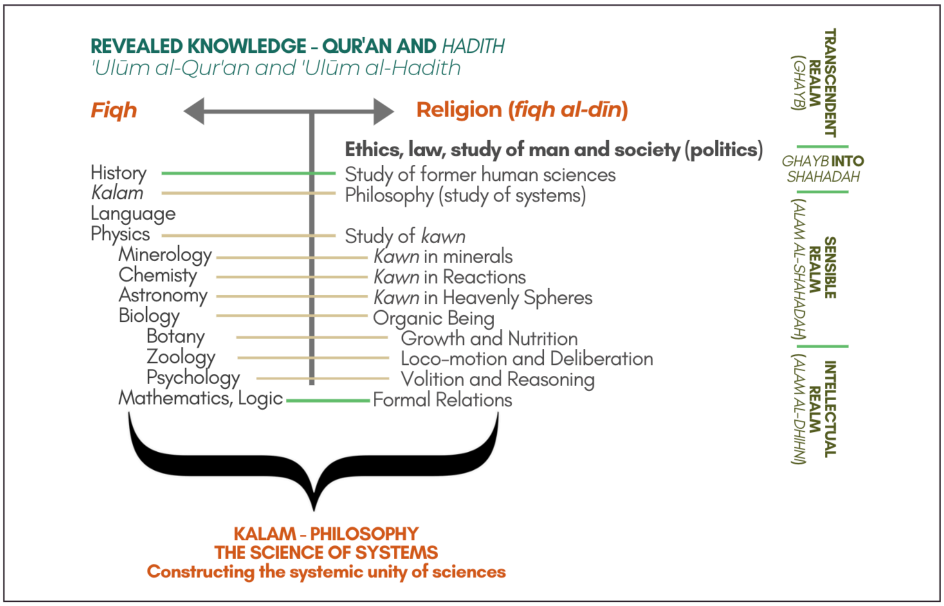
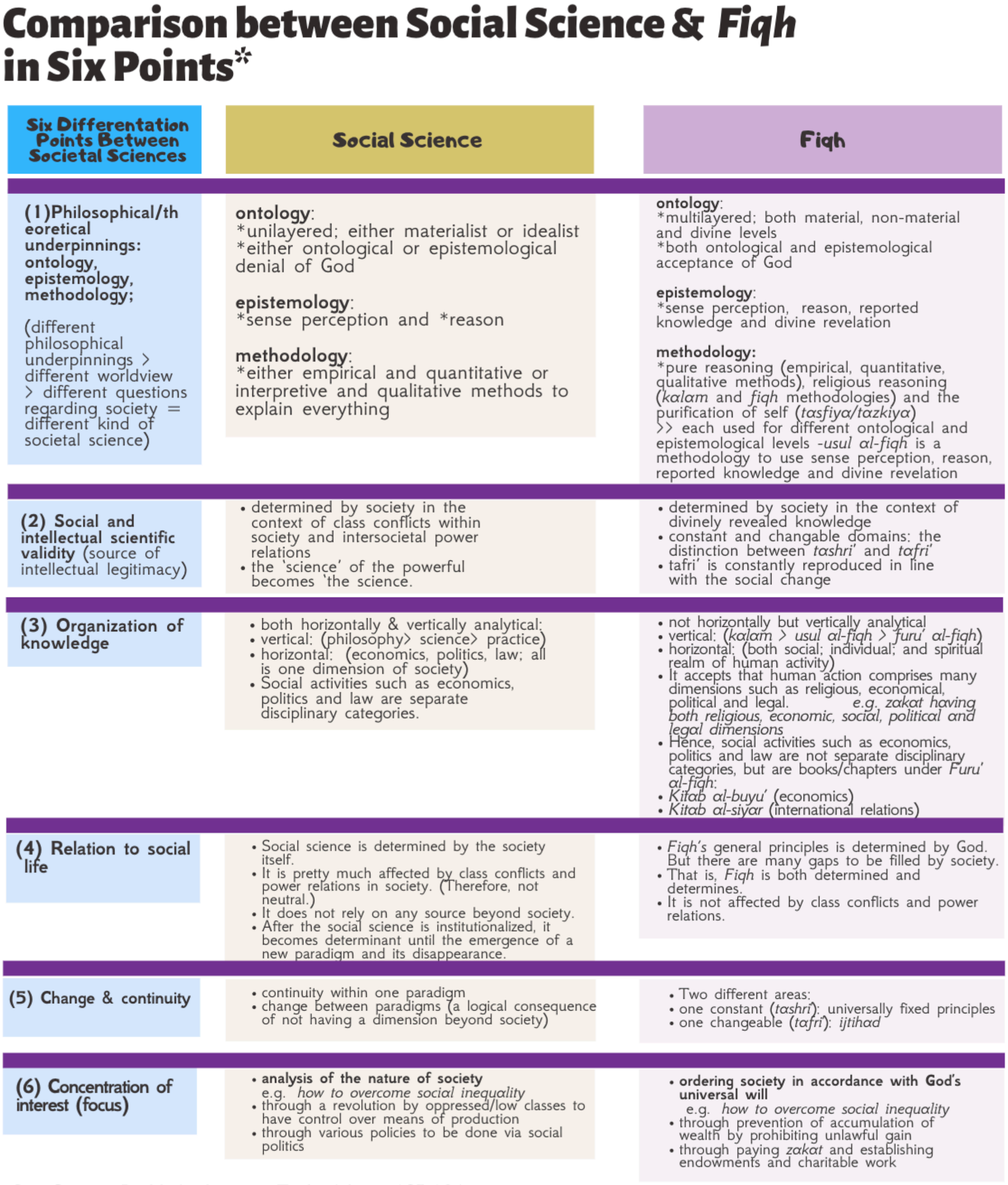

REVEALED KNOWLEDGE - QUR'AN AND HADITH
'Ulūm al-Qur'an and 'Ulūm al-Hadith
Fiqh
Religion (fiqh al-dīn)
Ethics, law, study of man and society (politics)
History
Kalam
Language
Physics
Minerology
Chemisty
Astronomy
Biology
Botany
Zoology
Psychology
Mathematics, Logic
Study of former human sciences
Philosophy (study of systems)
Study of kawn
Kawn in minerals
Kawn in Reactions
Kawn in Heavenly Spheres
Organic Being
Growth and Nutrition
Loco-motion and Deliberation
Volition and Reasoning
Formal Relations
TRANSCENDENT REALM (GHAYB)
GHAYB INTO SHAHADAH
SENSIBLE REALM (ALAM AL-SHAHADAH)
INTELLECTUAL REALM (ALAM AL-DHIHN)
KALAM - PHILOSOPHY
THE SCIENCE OF SYSTEMS
Constructing the systemic unity of sciences

Figure 4.4: Another classification of sciences based on the early understanding of *fiqh*



Comparison between Social Science & *Fiqh* in Six Points*

Six Differentiation Points Between Societal Sciences	**Social Science**	***Fiqh***
(1)Philosophical/theoretical underpinnings: ontology, epistemology, methodology; (different philosophical underpinnings > different worldview > different questions regarding society = different kind of societal science)	**ontology**: *unilayered; either materialist or idealist *either ontological or epistemological denial of God **epistemology**: *sense perception and *reason **methodology**: *either empirical and quantitative or interpretive and qualitative methods to explain everything	**ontology**: *multilayered; both material, non-material and divine levels *both ontological and epistemological acceptance of God **epistemology**: *sense perception, reason, reported knowledge and divine revelation **methodology:** *pure reasoning (empirical, quantitative, qualitative methods), religious reasoning (*kalam* and *fiqh* methodologies) and the purification of self (*tasfiya/tazkiya*) >> each used for different ontological and epistemological levels -*usul al-fiqh* is a methodology to use sense perception, reason, reported knowledge and divine revelation
(2) Social and intellectual scientific validity (source of intellectual legitimacy)	• determined by society in the context of class conflicts within society and intersocietal power relations • the 'science' of the powerful becomes 'the science'.	• determined by society in the context of divinely revealed knowledge • constant and changable domains: the distinction between *tashri'* and *tafri'* • tafri' is constantly reproduced in line with the social change
(3) Organization of knowledge	• both horizontally & vertically analytical: • vertical: (philosophy> science> practice) • horizontal: (economics, politics, law; all is one dimension of society) • Social activities such as economics, politics and law are separate disciplinary categories.	• not horizontally but vertically analytical • vertical: (*kalam > usul al-fiqh > furu' al-fiqh*) • horizontal: (both social; individual; and spiritual realm of human activity) • It accepts that human action comprises many dimensions such as religious, economical, political and legal. *e.g. zakat having both religious, economic, social, political and legal dimensions* • Hence, social activities such as economics, politics and law are not separate disciplinary categories, but are books/chapters under *Furu' al-fiqh*: • *Kitab al-buyu'* (economics) • *Kitab al-siyar* (international relations)
(4) Relation to social life	• Social science is determined by the society itself. • It is pretty much affected by class conflicts and power relations in society. (Therefore, not neutral.) • It does not rely on any source beyond society. • After the social science is institutionalized, it becomes determinant until the emergence of a new paradigm and its disappearance.	• *Fiqh's* general principles is determined by God. But there are many gaps to be filled by society. • That is, *Fiqh* is both determined and determines. • It is not affected by class conflicts and power relations.
(5) Change & continuity	• continuity within one paradigm • change between paradigms (a logical consequence of not having a dimension beyond society)	• Two different areas: • one constant (*tashri'*): universally fixed principles • one changeable (*tafri'*): *ijtihad*
(6) Concentration of interest (focus)	• **analysis of the nature of society** e.g. *how to overcome social inequality* • through a revolution by oppressed/low classes to have control over means of production • through various policies to be done via social politics	• **ordering society in accordance with God's universal will** e.g. *how to overcome social inequality* • through prevention of accumulation of wealth by prohibiting unlawful gain • through paying *zakat* and establishing endowments and charitable work

*See. Şentürk, R., *Modernleşme ve Toplumbilim,* p.105-124.

Figure 4.5: Comparison between social science and *fiqh* in six points

3.1. *Fiqh*

The function of all societal sciences is to **offer solutions** to social problems by **explain**ing them. Since differing experiences of different societies produce different sciences, there is **no universal social science**. The worldview of each society determines its scientific tradition. Accordingly, each society produces its own social sciences. In Islamic civilization, ***Fiqh*** and its related disciplines serve this aim.

The dictionary meaning of the word '*Fiqh*' is 'deeper understanding' or 'penetrating comprehension'. *Fiqh*, as the societal science of the Islamic civilization, is developed by Muslims in order to analyze people's behavior and action ('*amal*) in general, and people's rights and responsibilities in their relationships in particular.

- Abu Hanifa (699-767) defines *fiqh as* "One's knowledge concerning one's rights and responsibilities (that stem from one's actions)" (معرفة النفس ما لها وما عليها) According to this definition: The purpose of '*ilm* is obtaining knowledge about one's rights and responsibilities; The subject of investigation is human behavior/action.

- Another definition was given by Imam Shafi'i (767-820), who puts a methodological emphasis in his formulation: "*Fiqh* is the extrapolation of *shar'i* judgments (norms that shape behavior) based on detailed proofs. According to this definition *Fiqh* is the systematic compilation of judgments based on proof and each judgment is proven rationally based on certain evidence."
  (العلم بالأحكام الشرعية العملية عن أدلتها التفصيلية)

Abu Hanifa emphasizes the outcome of *fiqh*, the rights and responsibilities of individuals, while Imam Shafi'i focuses more on how the normative rules (*ahkam*) are extracted from different sources of law such as Quran, *hadith*, *qiyas*, *ijtihad*, and *ijma*.

Fiqh is Islamic civilization's tool for solving social, economic, political and legal problems at the level of individuals (the micro level) and the level of groups (macro level). *Fiqh* is the understanding of society and normative (moral and legal) order: at the conceptual level, it has directed people's view

— as individuals and groups — on their society, phenomena, relations and institutions, while at the level of practice, it focuses their behavior in public in all its detail. *Fiqh* is a science that works with multiplicity of values and reason, even as it is based on an understanding of multiplex existence, method, truth, meaning and values. It is a science that harbors different views within it, a science that is open to change.

Fiqh, in its broader sense, consists of four layers:

1. ***Fiqh al-Akbar*** (conceptual foundations regarding existence and sources of knowledge; ontological and epistemological underpinnings)
2. ***Usūl al-Fiqh*** (analyzing and understanding the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, extrapolating norms for human behaviour; general methodology of all Islamic disciplines)
3. ***Furū' al-Fiqh*** *(Al-Fiqh al-'Amalī; Fiqh al-Zāhir)* (regarding observable human action in different domains)
4. ***Fiqh al-Bātin*** *(Tasawwuf)* (regarding internal dimension of human action)

At this point, we should remind you a critical point about term *fiqh* which is translated into other languages in the academic literature as **Islamic law**. Is it correct to translate *fiqh* as Islamic law? No, it is an inaccurate translation because you have seen that *fiqh* is the mother of all sciences in Islam, which means that at the beginning stage, it includes all of the sciences that Muslims try to develop: the law is just one part of it, not the whole of it. There is a law within *fiqh*, but *fiqh* cannot be reduced to law. *Fiqh* is more than law, because the *fiqh* norms shape every aspect of our lives from minor issues to major issues, like washing our hands after each meal, not eating too much, or always saying salaam to friends, as examples. All these are *fiqh* norms and rules. Legal norms or rules that are enforced by the state are only a small part of it. That is why calling *fiqh* Islamic law is not precise. ***Fiqh*** cannot be reduced to law, which is among its branches (*furu' al-fiqh*), because *fiqh* is very comprehensive, as it studies all human actions and all social relations and explains all the rights and duties, not only legal rights or duties or actions. Everything is subject to *fiqh*, which is why it is much broader than law.

The Islamic disciplines derive from *fiqh* more broadly, and almost all of the other sciences are networked around it:

- Some disciplines provide the ontological, epistemological, and conceptual foundations for *fiqh*. These disciplines are ***Kalām*** and **philosophy**.
- Some disciplines serve *fiqh*. **Humanities**, **linguistics**, **logic,** and **argumentation** provide some of the methodological tools of *fiqh*. Besides, *fiqh* has also a reciprocal relation with some disciplines. *Usul al-Fiqh* is the common interpretive methodology of all Islamic disciplines: e.g. the study of the Qur'an (*Tafsir*) and that of the *hadith*, while the Qur'an and *hadith* in turn are sources for *fiqh*. More specifically, the Qur'an and *hadith* are sources of Islamic Law (*dalil*).
- *Fiqh* also deals with social, family, political, and economic life as well, so it is very broad in scope, and almost all disciplines serve *fiqh* or somehow relate to *fiqh*. Fiqh, as the societal science of the Islamic civilization, was developed by Muslims in order to analyze people's behavior and action (*'amal*) in general, and people's rights and responsibilities in their relationships in particular. In other words, *fiqh* is Islamic civilization's tool for solving social, economic, political, and legal problems.

Fiqh as a Term: What Does *Fiqh* Mean?

As you will remember, the Islamic worldview was formed by Qur'an and *Sunnah* and it encourages Muslims toward knowledge activities. Both in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, there is a relevant emphasis on knowledge. In early Islam, two terms go together: *'Ilm* and *fiqh*. Both terms refer to knowledge but with nuances (Açıkgenç 2014):

'Ilm: expresses exact, precise and definite knowledge. *'Ilm* is mentioned in both Qur'an and hadith. It is used to refer to revealed knowledge which is definite and absolute and also to knowledge attained by men and women.

As revealed knowledge:
"Then if, (your deities) do not respond to your call for help then assured that this Book was revealed with the knowledge of Allah, and there is no true god but Him. Will you, then, surrender (to this truth)?" (*Hud* 11:14)

As knowledge attained by men and women:
"We have given them a book (Revelation) and explained it with a knowledge as a guidance and mercy for people who believe." (Al-Araf 7:52)

Fiqh signifies scientific and hence rational knowledge. If God wants to do good to a person, He gives him a deeper comprehension in religion. (Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, "*Kitab al-'Ilm*", Chapter 14)

Why and How did *Fiqh* Emerge?

For Islamic ontology, existence is created and has been being run by God. (لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَ الأَمْرُ) It is God who has created all things and runs them according to His Will. In the natural world, the fulfillment of His will is absolute. But the social world is partially left to humans' free will and is socially constructed to a certain extent. When human beings' free will is accorded with His universal will (*al-irade al-kulliyyah)*, due to the prevalence of His will, harmony will prevail in the relations of humans with God, nature, and society.

The Subject Matter of *Fiqh*

The subject matter of *fiqh* is observable human action (*'amal*) in a universal sense (not only actions of Muslims). Human action is composed of two layers: observable (*zahir*) and unobservable (*batin*) layer. These two layers are never conflated and are examined separately. *Fiqh al-zahir* studies external, observable, and objective aspects of human behavior. *Fiqh al-batin* studies the internal subjective aspect of behavior.

Every human action enters in one of the normative categories: required (*wajib*), forbidden (*haram*), recommended (*mandub*), disapproved (*makruh*), or merely permitted (*mubah*). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no human action that falls outside the field of *fiqh*. *Fiqh* includes all the dimensions human actions, both at the individual and societal levels.

A Concluding Note about *Fiqh*

Fiqh has two aspects: to explain and understand the society on one side, and to regulate the society on the other side.

- ✓ The aspect of explanation and understanding: "Who are we?" and "Who are the others?" These are two essential social questions that the people in the society ask. The answers to these questions determine the identity of the society. Fiqh which deals with these questions gave rise to the *millah* system, which used identification based on belief and creed. In Muslim thought, there are two types of society: the Muslim society and the non-Muslim societies. Fiqh focuses on relations within the society and with other societies. Its primary aim is to regulate these social relations. This is the reason why it is rare to find explanations in classical fiqh books. Rather, they focus on how to regulate relations in the society and with other societies.

- ✓ The aspect of regulation: fiqh regulates the society from a legal point of view. In addition to this, it also regulates issues related to economy, politics, morality, and worship. It focuses on people's behavior in public and regulates it with all its details. It regulates each issue case by case. First, it explains and defines the solution. The solutions provided at the individual level regulate the society as a whole. Thus, fiqh orders every human-related issue from the minor to the major (Şentürk 2017).

Therefore, you should bear in mind that *fiqh* deals both with "is" and "ought" questions; namely it is objective but also normative. In *fiqh*, the objectivity and normativity of sciences has not been a subject of debate. Indeed, the normative aspect of sciences is imbedded in the Islamic worldview which shapes its scientific tradition. Qur'an qualifies knowledge with a moral dimension:

The ones who do wrong follow their own whims without having any knowledge. Who will guide someone whom God has let go astray? They will have no supporters. (Al-Rum 30: 29)

Knowledge is not conceived to be value-neutral, it is linked with values. Therefore, it can be useful or harmful as the Prophet said: "O God, I seek refuge with You from the knowledge which is not useful." (Muslim, "Kital al-Dhikir," 7; Abu Dawud, "*Witr*", 32).

The principle for *fiqh* is that explanation and ordering cannot be separated. To be able to order, it is necessary to explain it first (Açıkgenç 2014).

As already mentioned, every civilization has a societal science to explain and regulate the social life. In Islamic civilization, this function is served by fiqh and its related disciplines. In the Western civilization, it is served by disciplines called social sciences. *Fiqh* and social sciences functionally correspond to each other in explaining and ordering social phenomena but are differentiated through their respective ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies.

Today, in the Muslim world there are two approaches to study human action: *fiqh* and social sciences. The former emerged in the Islamic civilization while the latter is a transplant. The subject matter of both is human action. Western social sciences came to the Muslim world at the beginning of the 20th century and tried to conquer the intellectual space filled by *fiqh*. The division and conflict continues today.

3.2. *Kalām*

The word *kalām* literally means language or speech but not of the ordinary kind. It refers to human language which is discursive. In early Islam, the word kalām was used to refer to philosophical studies, and as such, *kalām* is the word used to express the concept of philosophy in the early Islamic scientific tradition. Later on, the *mutakallimūn* defined it as "the science which is concerned with firmly establishing religious beliefs by adducing proofs and with banishing doubts." (Açıkgenç 2014)

Know that: *Kalām* is translated as Islamic theology into English, but this is a bad translation. Theology is the study of God and God's relation to the world, which does not fit the definition of *Kalām*. Rather, *kalām* is philosophy peculiar to the worldview of Islam which is its general framework, and as such, it deserves the name 'Islamic philosophy.'

We can enumerate the purposes of *kalām* as follows:

- Proving the Islamic creed: (God’s existence, tenets of belief, and the prophethood).

- Refuting the false creed: (atheism, Materialism, deism, anthropomorphism, and other false and heretic beliefs and innovations).
- Establishing the foundation for other disciplines, such as *fiqh* and other physical sciences.

Abu Hanifa calls *kalām* "*Fiqh al-akbar,*" which means the greatest *fiqh* or the greatest knowledge, because it provides the Islamic worldview, the ontological and epistemological foundations for *fiqh*. It also gives Muslims a general view on the social world which is based on the following tenets:

- Existence really exists.
- We may know beings. Our knowledge comes through three sources of knowledge (*asbab al-'ilm*): 1) reason, 2) sense perception, and 3) revelation.
- The universe is created by God, and He commands over it.
- The universe operates by the laws of Allah (*sunnatullah*), and human beings have only particular will.
- Humans have free will, therefore they choose themselves to be believers or non-believers.
- Allah calls people to obedience by sending them messengers.
- The ones who obey will be awarded, while the ones who do not obey will be punished in the hereafter. (Şentürk, 2018)

3.3. History as a Science

How did history as a science develop in the Islamic tradition? The interest in history started first when many companions of the Prophet tried to record his life in every small detail as much as possible. For this purpose, they kept *sahifahs* (scripts), namely small booklets written by the companions of Prophet Muhammad during his lifetime. So, many of his words and actions were recorded in his lifetime. This was a customary practice among the Arabs to preserve in writing or in memory the wise sayings of their predecessors.

This attitude of keeping written *hadith* gradually led to bigger compilations; amongst these, the following are the most celebrated:

l. Kitab of Asma' bint Umays (d. 38/658-9);
2. Kitab of Sa'ad ibn 'Ubadah (d. c. 15/636);
3. Sahifah of ‘Amr ibn al-'As (d. 65 /684-5), which was called *al-Sahifat al-Sadiqah*, containing a few hundred *hadith*;
4. *Sahifah* of Samura ibn Jundah (d.679).

At this stage of compilation, we find many scholars who tried to deal with certain problems related to the hadith compilations, such as how to organize the hadith literature and develop technical terminology to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic hadith.

The Traditionist School went through three stages until eventually two disciplines emerged:

1. The *sahifah* stage, when hadith and historical data concerning the early events of Islam were collected either orally or in written or in both forms;
2. The *maghazz* stage, when these efforts were more systematic and compilations began to be made with certain methodological procedure, such as chronology and sequence of events;
3. The *Sirah* stage which was started by Ibn Ishaq, when the historical data was organized in a meaningful way to reflect the early Islamic history.

As the result of these three stages, ***hadith*** and **history** emerged as independent sciences.

Let’s explore the differences between hadith literature on one side and *Sirah* and *Maghazz* literature on the other side. *Sirah* and *Maghazz* literature was about Prophet Muhammad’s life, his relations with his enemies or the non-Muslims. In other words, it recorded chronologically the Prophet Muhammad’s life. *Hadith* literature had just collected his sayings and practices without chronologically ordering them. It focused on what the Prophet said or whether he did a specific thing or not. In Hadith literature, the main purpose was to present examples from Prophet Muhammad so that Muslims can take him as an example and practice his sayings and actions in their lives.

3.4. Other Sciences

Political Philosophy: The first political activity took place after Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina with the so-called Constitution of Medina. This constitution is important not only because it is the first written constitution in the world but also because it is an example of consensus building. Prophet Muhammad brought together conflicting tribes and religious groups (Muslims, Jews, Christians, and polytheists) and made peace among them. Therefore, the Constitution of Madina is an important contribution to political philosophy. Moreover, by this constitution Madina was considered as a state, and the Prophet was tacitly accepted as the head of the state. Thus, a political conception in conjunction with its legal and social aspects was about to develop from this first agreement between the Muslims and other citizens of Medina.

Grammar and Linguistic Sciences (*al-nahw* and *fiqh al-lughah*): a group of scholars were actively involved in the theoretical study of language. The theoretical knowledge they developed was later consolidated into a new school, which is known as the 'school of the Grammarians' (*al-Nahwiyyun*). The progress in the field of study eventually resulted in the emergence of a new science, grammar (or in general, linguistic science). This group of thinkers developed their own specific scientific scheme, amongst which the most important is undoubtedly the term *nahw*, which came to signify all the scientific and philosophical activities on language studies. '*Nahw*' is of pure Arabic origin, which literally means 'path' and 'course,' but figuratively signifies 'mode,' 'manner,' and 'fashion.'

In Turkey, 2019 is declared as the year of Fuat Sezgin. To commemorate him, many activities and symposiums were organized, mostly about the history of engineering and natural sciences in Islam while social sciences and humanities were completely neglected. A group of social scientists decided to draw attention to the contribution of Muslims to these fields. They formed an organizing committee, but were immediately met with a challenge: the distinction between social sciences and humanities did not exist in the Islamic intellectual tradition. In order to break from the legacy of Eurocentrism, the committee decided to name the symposium “The History of Civilizational Sciences in Islam” referring to Farabi’s and Ibn Khaldūn’s more comprehensive classification of sciences. Farabi called it *al-ilm al-madani*, while Ibn Khaldūn called it *ilm al-umran*, both of which mean civilizational sciences. It should also be emphasized that both Farabi and Ibn Khaldūn used “civilization” to mean “society” in general.

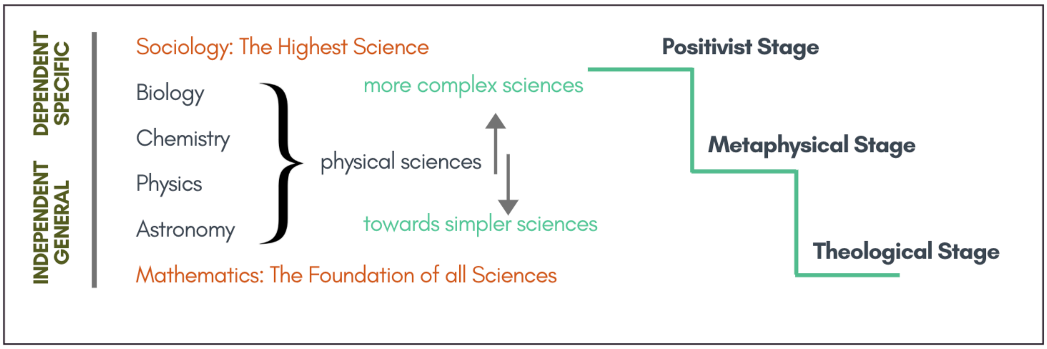
Fuat Sezgin was born in Bitlis in 1924. After completing middle and upper school in Erzurum, Sezgin became the pupil of the German orientalist Helmut Ritter in İstanbul. After Sezgin graduated from the Faculty of Arts of Istanbul University in 1951, he wrote a doctoral thesis on in the field of Arabic language and literature. He became a professor in 1954, having finished his thesis on “Buhârî´nin Kaynakları” [The Sources of al-Buḫārī]. After 1960 military coup he continue his career in Germany. In the Frankfurt University History of Science Institute he wrote a second doctoral thesis in 1965 on Jabir ibn Hayyan. In 1967 Fuat Sezgin finished the first volume of the most wide-ranging work ever written in its field, the Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums (History of Arabic Written Works), and when he died he was writing the 18th volume." (Symposium of Fuat Sezgin)

4. Classification of Sciences: Social Sciences versus Humanities?

Note the common distinction between social sciences and humanities that emerged in modern Europe. It originates from the idea that humanities (disciplines like literature and philosophy) should not be called sciences because they do not use empirical methods such as observation and measurable data.

Every classification is made on the basis of a criterion. For example, if we want to classify all living beings, then we can classify variously based on the criterion we choose. We may choose motion as our criterion and classify according to the way living beings move: Plants, move in their own place but cannot move from place to place; but animals can move both ways. Then we may argue that human beings move rationally. This way we arrive at only three kinds of living beings. This means that every criterion is relative; namely relative to the criterion chosen. In the same way sciences are also classified on the basis of certain criteria. Let us examine the classifications given below and try to understand their criterion.

4.1. The Uniplex Classification of Sciences



DEPENDENT SPECIFIC
INDEPENDENT GENERAL
Sociology: The Highest Science
Biology
Chemistry
Physics
Astronomy
Mathematics: The Foundation of all Sciences
more complex sciences
physical sciences
towards simpler sciences
Positivist Stage
Metaphysical Stage
Theological Stage

Figure 4.6: Auguste Comte's classification of sciences and the law of three stages

4.2. An Example of Multiplex Classification of Sciences:

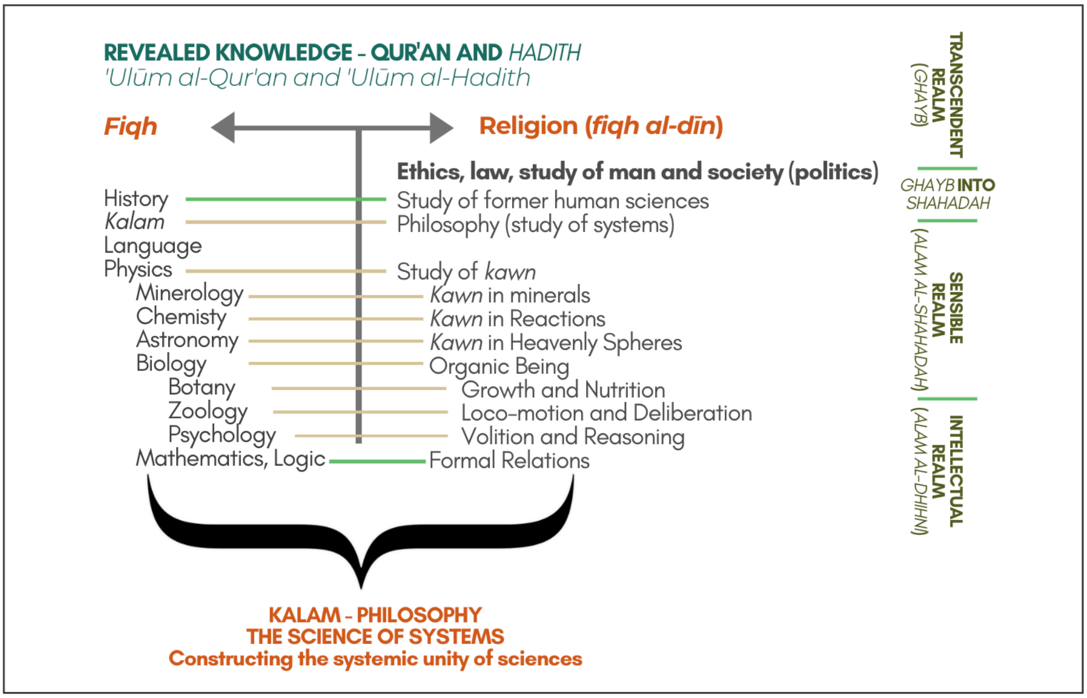
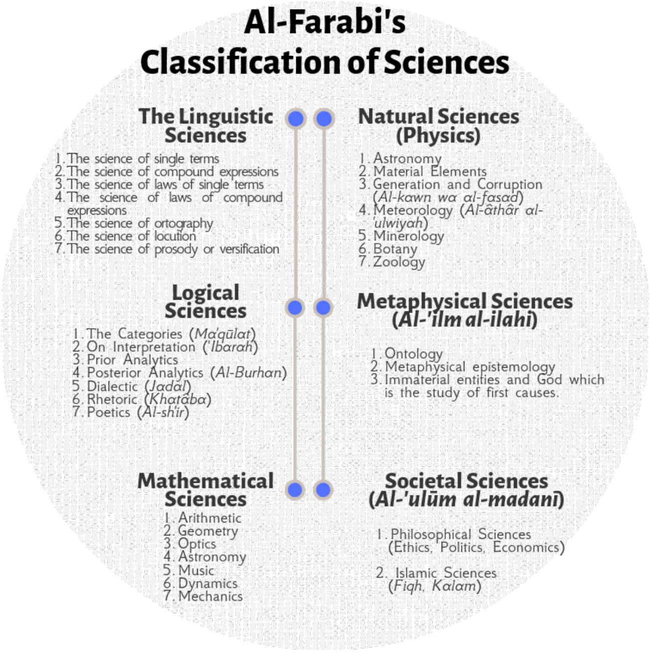
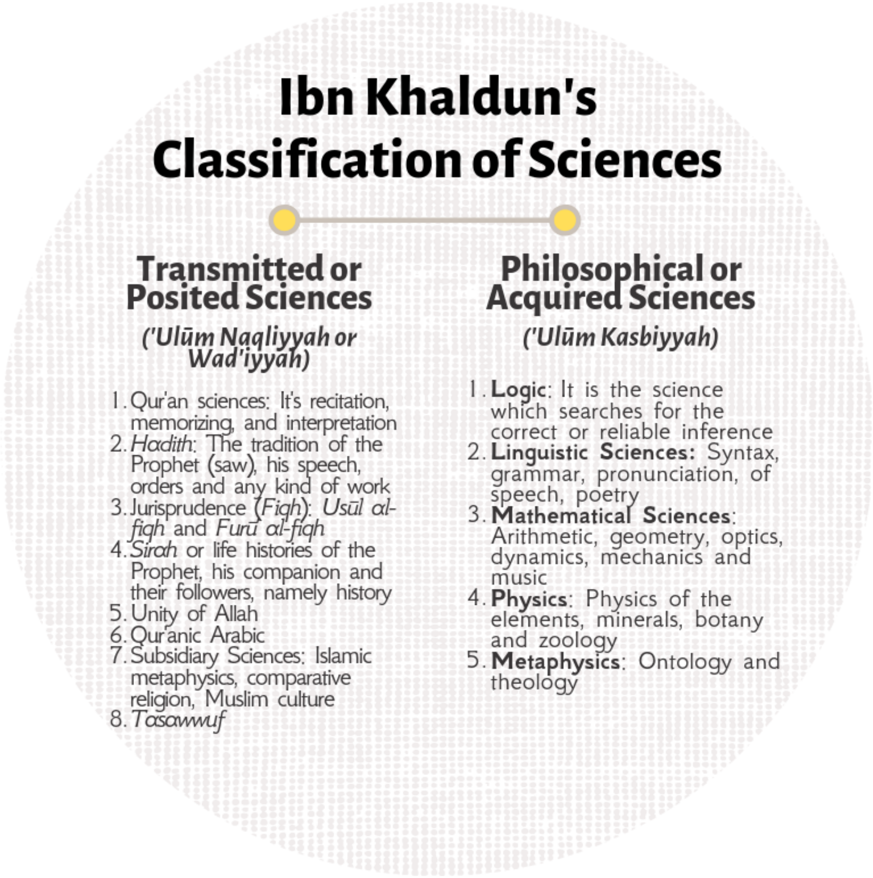

REVEALED KNOWLEDGE - QUR'AN AND *HADITH*
'Ulūm al-Qur'an and 'Ulūm al-Hadith
Fiqh
Religion (*fiqh al-dīn*)
Ethics, law, study of man and society (politics)
History
Study of former human sciences
Kalam
Philosophy (study of systems)
Language
Physics
Study of *kawn*
Minerology
Kawn in minerals
Chemisty
Kawn in Reactions
Astronomy
Kawn in Heavenly Spheres
Biology
Organic Being
Botany
Growth and Nutrition
Zoology
Loco-motion and Deliberation
Psychology
Volition and Reasoning
Mathematics, Logic
Formal Relations
KALAM - PHILOSOPHY
THE SCIENCE OF SYSTEMS
Constructing the systemic unity of sciences
TRANSCENDENT REALM
(*GHAYB*)
GHAYB INTO *SHAHADAH*
SENSIBLE REALM
(*ALAM AL-SHAHADAH*)
INTELLECTUAL REALM
(*ALAM AL-DHIHN*)

Figure 4.7: Classification of multiplex sciences


Al-Farabi's
Classification of Sciences
The Linguistic Sciences
1. The science of single terms
2. The science of compound expressions
3. The science of laws of single terms
4. The science of laws of compound expressions
5. The science of ortography
6. The science of locution
7. The science of prosody or versification
Natural Sciences (Physics)
1. Astronomy
2. Material Elements
3. Generation and Corruption (*Al-kawn wa al-fasad*)
4. Meteorology (*Al-âthâr al-'ulwiyah*)
5. Minerology
6. Botany
7. Zoology
Logical Sciences
1. The Categories (*Ma'qūlat*)
2. On Interpretation (*'Ibarah*)
3. Prior Analytics
4. Posterior Analytics (*Al-Burhan*)
5. Dialectic (*Jadal*)
6. Rhetoric (*Khatâba*)
7. Poetics (*Al-sh'ir*)
Metaphysical Sciences (*Al-'ilm al-ilahi*)
1. Ontology
2. Metaphysical epistemology
3. Immaterial entities and God which is the study of first causes.
Mathematical Sciences
1. Arithmetic
2. Geometry
3. Optics
4. Astronomy
5. Music
6. Dynamics
7. Mechanics
Societal Sciences (*Al-'ulūm al-madanī*)
1. Philosophical Sciences (Ethics, Politics, Economics)
2. Islamic Sciences (*Fiqh, Kalam*)



Ibn Khaldun's Classification of Sciences

Transmitted or Posited Sciences

('Ulūm Naqliyyah or Wad'iyyah)

1. Qur'an sciences: It's recitation, memorizing, and interpretation
2. *Hadith*: The tradition of the Prophet (saw), his speech, orders and any kind of work
3. Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*): *Usūl al-fiqh* and *Furū al-fiqh*
4. *Sirah* or life histories of the Prophet, his companion and their followers, namely history
5. Unity of Allah
6. Qur'anic Arabic
7. Subsidiary Sciences: Islamic metaphysics, comparative religion, Muslim culture
8. *Tasawwuf*

Philosophical or Acquired Sciences

('Ulūm Kasbiyyah)

1. **Logic**: It is the science which searches for the correct or reliable inference
2. **Linguistic Sciences:** Syntax, grammar, pronunciation, of speech, poetry
3. **Mathematical Sciences**: Arithmetic, geometry, optics, dynamics, mechanics and music
4. **Physics**: Physics of the elements, minerals, botany and zoology
5. **Metaphysics**: Ontology and theology

Summary

- Every civilization has its own scientific process. Through this scientific process, sciences and disciplines emerge.
- This is the worldview which leads the society to pursue knowledge activities. It gives shape and identity to the sciences and disciplines. The Islamic worldview is based on Qur'an and *Sunnah*.
- The questions and problems that the society raises in regard to social phenomena become the subject matter of sciences. The subject matters are investigated according to specific methods and scientific knowledge is produced. When a certain body of knowledge is accumulated, different disciplines begin to crystallize.

- The Islamic civilization produced its own disciplines depending on the questions and problems of its society.
- In response to its social issues, the Muslims formed a comprehensive science that it *fiqh*. *Fiqh* serves the function of societal science in Islamic civilization.
- Every civilization has a societal science which explains and orders its social phenomena. The societal science of Western civilization is social sciences. The societal science of Islamic civilization is fiqh and its related disciplines. In a similar way, the societal science of East Asian civilization is Confucianism, and that of South Asian civilization is Hinduism, although its influence is weakened by Westernization.
- "What makes a social study scientific?" There is no universal answer. The criteria changes from culture to culture, civilization to civilization. The ontology, epistemology, and methodology play a grand role in determining the criteria for what is scientific or not.
- Social sciences have mainly two functions: explain and regulate society. There is a consensus on the descriptive function of social sciences while its normativity is still debatable.
- The compartmentalization of social sciences became apparent in the 19th century when the departments for specific disciplines were established. Despite this specialization of different disciplines, there is an overlap between their interests and methods.
- Social sciences and humanities appear to be different fields of sciences. However, both social sciences and humanities rely heavily on each other's sources, methods, and results.

Key Words

societal science:	is an umbrella term referring to the study of society and social phenomena in every civilization.
social sciences:	are a group of disciplines that study social actions and relations between individuals, groups, and institutions for the purpose of exploring the reasons behind them.
worldview:	the prerequisite to have science in a society is the existence of a **worldview** that is appropriate for the scientific activities. This worldview leads to knowledge accumulation and forms a suitable environment for a scientific tradition to emerge.
civilization:	is a social context in which Science emerges as a product of a long historical process.
social action:	is the subject matter of social sciences. Social action is a type of action which takes into consideration the existence of other people.
scientific method:	is to generate testable hypotheses in order to predict future outcomes and the ability to falsify these hypotheses.
nomothetic science:	an approach to science which presupposes that universally applicable scientific rules can be generated

	through the study and analysis of a large number of randomly selected cases.
idiographic science:	an approach to science which presupposes that scientific knowledge comes through the evaluation of single events in their intrinsic complexity.
humanities:	is a group of disciplines that concern themselves with human beings and their culture.
value-relevance:	is to select the objects of study and to make results out of research data in relation to values.
value-freedom:	Weber believes that the inquirer should be objective, and to be objective, they must try to be value-neutral. This is what Weber calls value-freedom.

Dig Deep

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Chapter Five

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS AND THEIR INTERRELATIONS

Focus Questions

- ◊ What are the three main levels of analysis?
- ◊ How are they interrelated?
- ◊ Why is it important to understand the levels of analysis?
- ◊ Does *fiqh* pay attention to the levels of analysis?
- ◊ How can awareness about the levels of analysis help you to avoid logical fallacies when conducting research?
- ◊ How can descriptive and normative modes of analysis be differentiated?
- ◊ What is the structure and agency about?

Every social phenomenon can be analyzed at multiple levels. Take for example your decision to enroll in a social science program at the university. You can analyze this at an individual level. Your decision to study social sciences at this level can be explained in relation to your own personal choice, preferences, psychology, upbringing, identity, character, fears or personal will. At the family level, your parents or senior siblings may have encouraged or inspired you to become a social scientist. Peer pressure coming from your circle of friends may also shape your career choice.

At a broader level you can also analyze how the local community that you belong to has influenced your decision. You can think about your interaction with other members of the local community, for example. Let’s say a very influential social scientist lives in your neighborhood and you had a personal interaction with him or her. Or you might have observed that the respected members of your community happen to be social scientists. All of these are possible factors at the local community level that might have shaped your decision.

Moving on to a larger level, in your town, there might be some local administrative decision to support social science students. Or perhaps the country's top social science-focused university may be located in your town, and through attending their public events you may have developed an interest in this field.

If you think of yourself as a member of a larger social unit such as your nation, there might be governmental decisions that need to be taken into consideration. For example, there might be a nation-wide policy to promote social sciences. The government or other nation-wide organizations may support universities offering social science and make them more appealing to you through good advertisement and outreach.

To come up with much broader explanations, think of your decision at a global level beyond your country. There could be an international organization offering scholarships for social science. Your country might have signed an agreement to regionally boost education in the social sciences. Current global challenges (global ethics, extreme poverty, oppression of minorities) may also impact young students like yourself when deciding on an educational career path by creating more demand for social scientists.

You can even analyze your decision at a civilizational level. Maybe you are interested in reviving the demised social scientific tradition of Islamic civilization or you are interested in promoting western social sciences.

As you can see, even a simple matter such as making a decision on what educational career path to follow can lend itself to an inquiry at different levels. As a social scientist, it is important for you to be aware of the level of analysis you are operating at in order to avoid logical fallacies.

Now you will learn about some basic elements of social research including: **units of analysis**, **units of observation**, **social units** and **levels of analysis**.

1. Units of Analysis

A social research project is not possible without a unit of analysis. Therefore one of the earliest decisions you need to take as a researcher is to identify your unit of analysis. This means to decide what or who is the subject that will be studied, analyzed and generalized as part of your research. In other words, a unit of analysis is the subject that you want to say something about as a result of your inquiry. In the social sciences, standard units of analysis include individuals, groups, families, cultures, communities, institutions, countries, regional organizations (e.g. the African Union, the Arab League, the European Union, ASEAN), and international alliances such as the World Trade Organization.

What are the frequently used units of analysis in your discipline?

You need to be careful not to confuse a unit of observation with a unit of analysis. These two may overlap sometimes, but not necessarily. The thing that you actually observe, assess and quantify in order to improve your understanding of the unit of analysis is your unit of observation.

For example, you may compare the economic situation of two countries by looking at individual income figures. In this research, the unit of observation is individual people, but the unit of analysis is the countries.

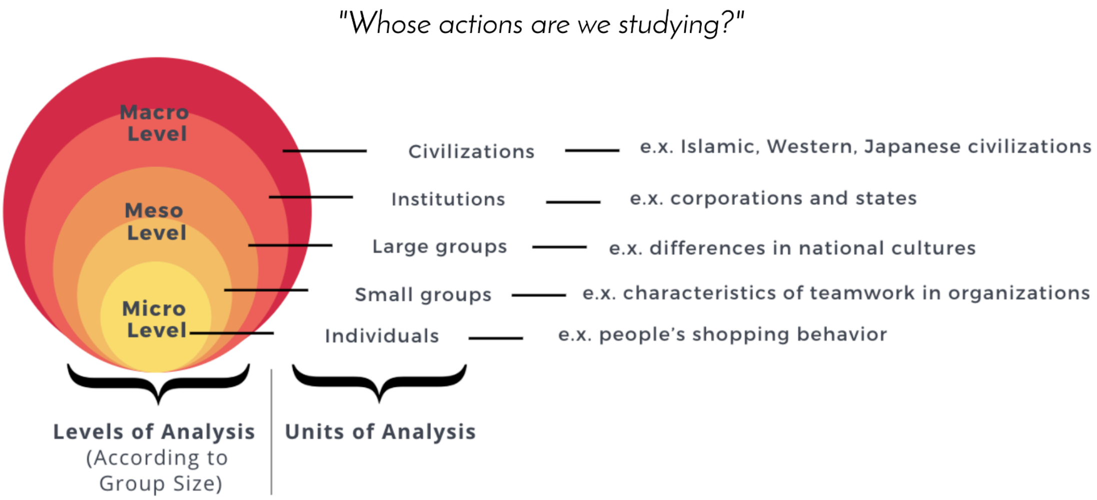

"Whose actions are we studying?"
Macro Level
Meso Level
Micro Level
Civilizations
e.x. Islamic, Western, Japanese civilizations
Institutions
e.x. corporations and states
Large groups
e.x. differences in national cultures
Small groups
e.x. characteristics of teamwork in organizations
Individuals
e.x. people's shopping behavior
Levels of Analysis (According to Group Size)
Units of Analysis

Figure 5.1: Levels and units of analysis

Now it should be clear to you that the way you frame your research question determines your unit of analysis, whereas the unit of observation is defined mainly by your methodological choices.

Another important concept here is a social unit. The social sciences and the humanities deal with human beings either as an individual or as belonging to social units. A **social unit** is defined as *"[i]nterconnected parts of the social world ranging from small groups to societies"* (Ballantine, et al. 2008). Small groups can be as small as two or three people known as dyads and triad, respectively. For example, a husband and a wife constitute a dyad. Three students working on a class assignment would be an example of a triad.

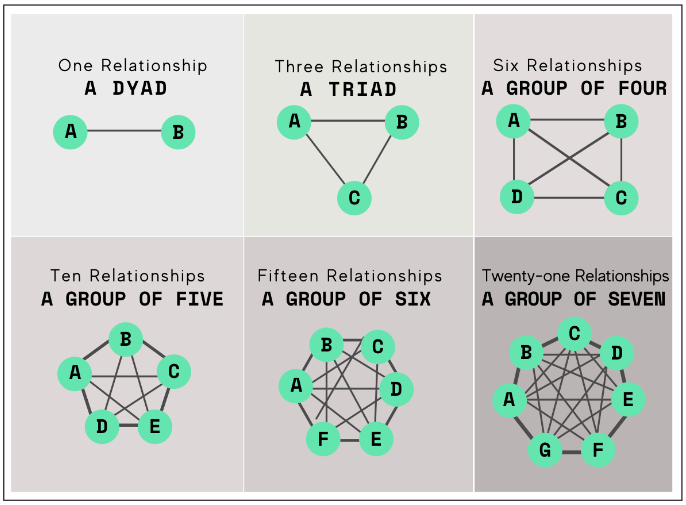
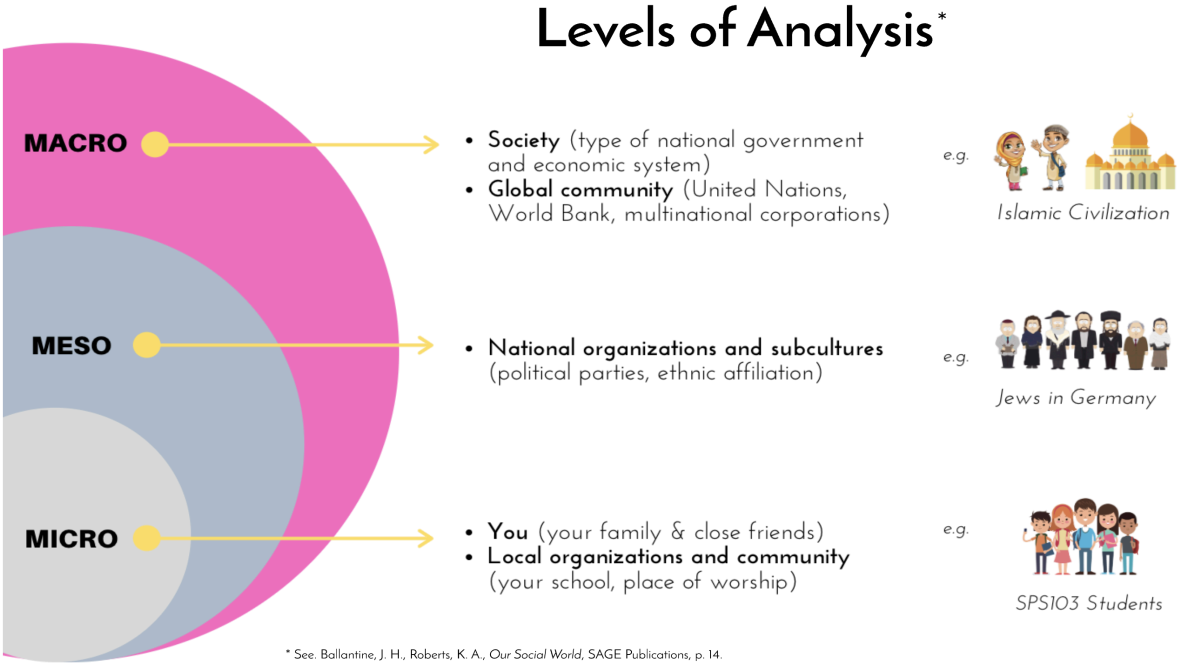

One Relationship
A DYAD
A
B
Three Relationships
A TRIAD
A
B
C
Six Relationships
A GROUP OF FOUR
A
B
C
D
Ten Relationships
A GROUP OF FIVE
A
B
C
D
E
Fifteen Relationships
A GROUP OF SIX
A
B
C
D
E
F
Twenty-one Relationships
A GROUP OF SEVEN
A
B
C
D
E
F
G

Figure 5.2: Relationships in social groups of different sizes

One individual can be a part of multiple social units simultaneously. For example, a man constitutes a dyad with his wife and at the same time he belongs to another larger unit such as a nation-wide organization (e.g. a political party). When the same individual belongs to various social units, it is possible that they may conflict with one another.

2. Micro, Meso and Macro Levels

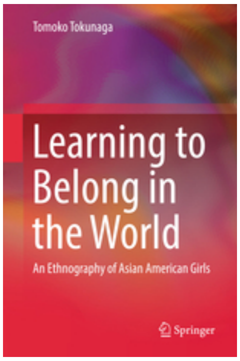
The unit of analysis will determine the level of analysis that you will operate at. Social scientists refer to three main levels of analysis: micro, meso and macro. There are no precise distinctions among these levels. You may come across various examples for each of these levels in different sources. It is also important not to think that these levels exist independently of each other. They are rather to allow you to highlight certain social forces and processes according to the area in which you are focusing on in your research. They also enable you to evaluate alternative theories in a comparative manner (Johnson, 2008).


Levels of Analysis*
MACRO
• Society (type of national government and economic system)
• Global community (United Nations, World Bank, multinational corporations)
e.g.
Islamic Civilization
MESO
• National organizations and subcultures (political parties, ethnic affiliation)
e.g.
Jews in Germany
MICRO
• You (your family & close friends)
• Local organizations and community (your school, place of worship)
e.g.
SPS103 Students

* See. Ballantine, J. H., Roberts, K. A., *Our Social World*, SAGE Publications, p. 14.

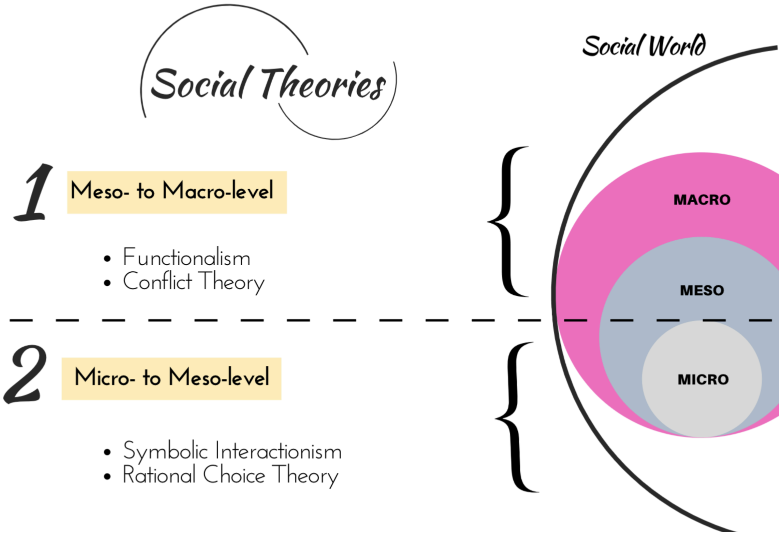
Figure 5.3: Levels of analysis

If your study focuses on individuals or interactions within a small group such as a family, then you employ a **micro level analysis**. Micro-level approaches are capable of providing a nuanced account of one-to-one, face-to-face human interaction in different social settings. However, if you are interested in understanding the influence of broader social forces, you should move to a higher level of analysis.


Tomoko Tokunaga
Learning to Belong in the World
An Ethnography of Asian American Girls
Springer

A typical example of a micro level study can be Tomoko Tokunaga’s “Learning to Belong in the World: An Ethnography of Asian American Girls”. Tokunaga looks at the daily lives of nine Asian american high school girls in order to understand how they construct "sites of belonging and becoming".

Meso level analysis usually deals with intermediate-sized social units that are between local communities and nations. These include geographical or administrative units within a country (provinces in Pakistan, states in Nigeria, oblasts in Russia) countrywide social or political organizations, professional associati-ons (The Psychiatric Associa-tion of Turkey), labour unions, guilds, ethnic or religious minorities within a nation (Turks in Germany, Muslims in China, Romans or Assyriac Christians in Turkey, Nigerians in the United Kingdom, Chinese in Malaysia, Somalians in Kenya) and institutions (the legal system or political structure of a country and national economy). The meso level stands between the micro and macro level as it examines the part of the social world that is beyond one’s individual control and personal daily experiences. Thus, unlike, dyads, triads or families, not every member of a meso level social unit is known to each


Social Theories
1
Meso- to Macro-level
• Functionalism
• Conflict Theory
2
Micro- to Meso-level
• Symbolic Interactionism
• Rational Choice Theory
Social World
MACRO
MESO
MICRO

other. But at the same time meso level social units are not as wide as nation states, international alliances or civilizations (Ballantine, et al. 2008).

To examine large-scale patterns, social structures and institutions, you need to conduct a macro level analysis. It is at this level that you will be able to look at the interactions at the broadest level which include interrelationships between and across nations, civilizations and international alliances. If you were to compare national education systems, then you will need to design your research as a macro level study (Blackstone, 2012).

3. Levels of Analysis in *Fiqh*

As a societal science, *fiqh* also takes into consideration levels of analysis depending on the size of the group which is treated as a social actor of an inquiry. In *fiqh* works, one can observe that actions of individuals are analyzed in varying degrees, and this is in fact the most common focus of fiqh. Fiqh also focuses on the actions of collectives including religious groups such as the *millah* of the Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Another level of analysis is the actions of the collectivities such as a Muslim country, which is referred to as *dar al-Islam*, and a non-Muslim country at war with Muslims, which is often called *dar al-harb*, and the interrelations between the two. Finally, we have the actions of institutions and legal personalities like the state or *waqf* that are analyzed and studied in *fiqh*. This account demonstrates how *fiqh* uses units of analysis from different levels ranging from the most micro to the most macro level.

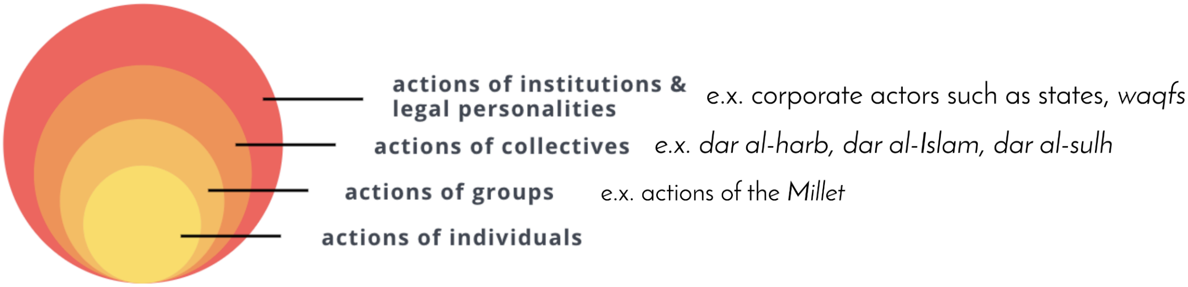

actions of institutions & legal personalities
e.x. corporate actors such as states, *waqfs*
actions of collectives
e.x. *dar al-harb, dar al-Islam, dar al-sulh*
actions of groups
e.x. actions of the *Millet*
actions of individuals

Figure 5.4: Levels of analysis in *fiqh*

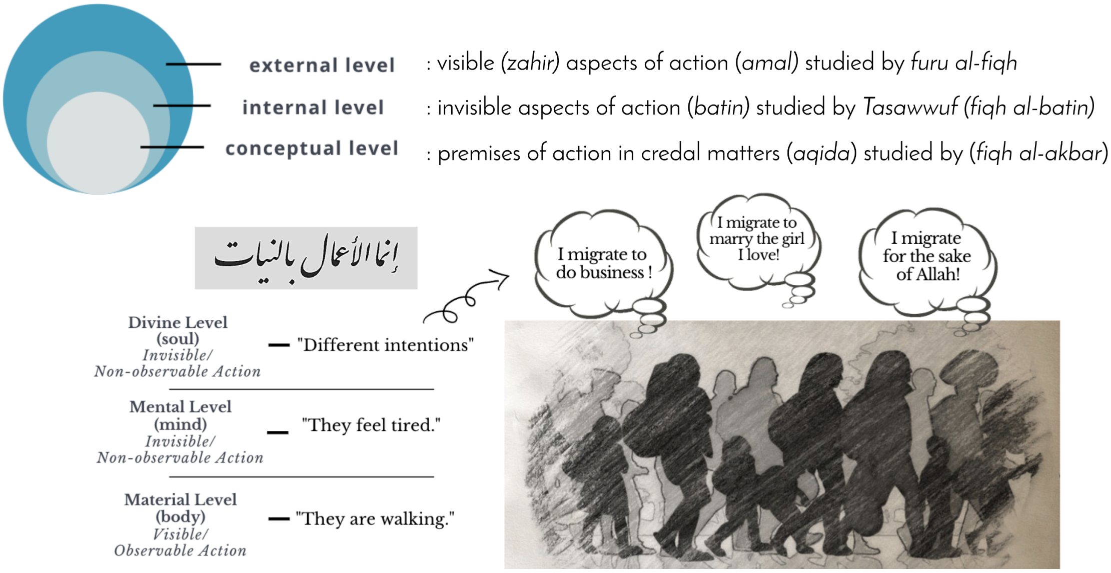

external level
: visible (zahir) aspects of action (amal) studied by furu al-fiqh
internal level
: invisible aspects of action (batin) studied by Tasawwuf (fiqh al-batin)
conceptual level
: premises of action in credal matters (aqida) studied by (fiqh al-akbar)
إنما الأعمال بالنيات
I migrate to do business !
I migrate to marry the girl I love!
I migrate for the sake of Allah!
Divine Level (soul) Invisible/ Non-observable Action
"Different intentions"
Mental Level (mind) Invisible/ Non-observable Action
"They feel tired."
Material Level (body) Visible/ Observable Action
"They are walking."

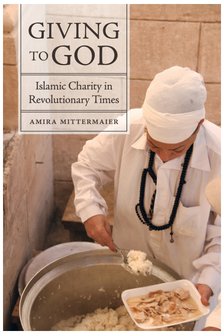
Figure 5.5: Levels of analysis and human action

4. What level to choose?

Decision about the level of analysis that you will use mainly depends on your research question. Note that some topics are more suitable for a particular level of analysis. However, others may lend itself to all three levels of inquiry more easily. In this case, your specific interest and the approach you want to employ will be decisive. Have a look at the following example:

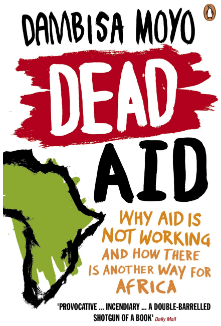
Let's say you are interested in studying charity activities.

If you want to understand what everyday life is like for a philanthropist or what sort of motivations individuals have when they donate to charity, you will need to employ a micro level analysis. The same applies if you are interested in studying the inner workings of a specific charity organization or the styles of communication within that organization. *The Science of Giving*, a book edited by Oppenheimer and Olivola (2015), offers insights on how charitable decisions are made by focusing on emotional and cognitive mechanisms from the perspective of psychology.


GIVING TO GOD
Islamic Charity in Revolutionary Times
AMIRA MITTERMAIER

Similarly, *Giving to God* by Amira Mittermaier, an ethnographic account of everyday practices of Islamic charity in Egypt, serves as an example of how charity can be studied at the micro level.

Charity can also be analyzed at the meso level. You can examine the interactions between charity organizations and analyze how backgrounds of charity organizations affect their activities. At the macro level, you can compare the impact of charity activities across communities and countries. You can also study international humanitarian aid organizations and evaluate how these organizations impact national economies. You can refer to Zambian international economist Dambisa Moyo's work *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* as a good example of such work. In this book, she assesses whether or not international aid to African countries has improved the lives of people.


DAMBISA MOYO
DEAD
AID
WHY AID IS NOT WORKING AND HOW THERE IS ANOTHER WAY FOR AFRICA
'PROVOCATIVE ... INCENDIARY ... A DOUBLE-BARRELLED SHOTGUN OF A BOOK' Daily Mail

Examples of Theories for Different Levels of Analysis

E.g. Why did Hector drop out of school?

a. Micro – to Meso - Level Theories

Symbolic Interaction Theory sees humans as active agents who create shared meanings and symbols and events and then interact on the basis of those meanings. E.g. *We look at how Hector interacts with his family and friends.*

Rational Choice Theory: Humans are fundamentally concerned with self-interests making rational decisions based on weighing costs and rewards of the projected outcome of an action. Their primary aim is to maximize their own benefits and minimize costs.

E.g. *Hector will decide whether to drop out of the school or not based on calculating rewards and costs (future opportunities vs. supporting the family now)*

b. Meso-Macro Level Theories:

Structural-Functional Theory: By looking at macro-level organizations it assumes that all parts of the social structure (including groups, organizations, and institutions), the culture (values and beliefs), and social processes (e.g. social change or child-rearing) work together to make the whole society run smoothly and harmoniously.

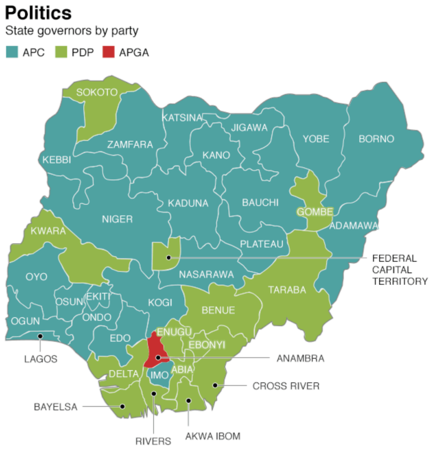
Conflict theory: Conflict and the potential for conflict underlie all social relations. The existing social order reflects powerful people imposing their values and beliefs on the weak.
E.g *Hector drops out of school because he belongs to the cheap labour reservoir.* (Ballantine, et al. 2008: 31-37)

5. Faulty Reasoning in Research

If you do not pay attention to the levels of analysis, you may end up drawing false conclusions from your study. The data collected from one level is not necessarily convertible to another level. The disregard for the levels of analysis is known as an *ecological fallacy*, which is a common mistake often made when interpreting the results of your research. It emerges from the application of group statistics to individuals. Inferences you make about an individual based on group level data is not necessarily valid. Thus, ecological fallacy is a result of an assumption that "relationships observed for groups necessarily hold for individuals" (Roy and Dorak 2010: 486).

> "The ecological fallacy is a type of faulty reasoning that sometimes is made in the interpretation of results that come from the analysis of aggregate data. This mistake occurs when data that exist at a group or aggregate level are analyzed and interpretations are then made (generalized) as though they automatically apply at the level of the individuals who make up those groups." (Lavrakas, 2008)

Imagine that you conduct a study about the result of elections in Nigeria which is composed of thirty six states. You collect data on the state level by looking at the economic indicators of each state. You discover that wealthier states tend to vote People's Democratic Party (PDP). A researcher who does not pay attention to the level of analysis may conclude that wealthier Nigerian voters tend to vote PDP. This is a typical example of "ecological fallacy". Since you collected your data on the state level, your conclusion about individual Nigerian voters cannot be derived from it.


Politics
State governors by party
APC
PDP
APGA
SOKOTO
KATSINA
JIGAWA
YOBE
BORNO
ZAMFARA
KANO
KEBBI
KADUNA
BAUCHI
GOMBE
NIGER
ADAMAWA
KWARA
PLATEAU
FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY
NASARAWA
TARABA
OYO
OSUN
EKITI
KOGI
BENUE
OGUN
ONDO
ENUGU
EDO
EBONYI
LAGOS
ANAMBRA
DELTA
IMO
ABIA
CROSS RIVER
BAYELSA
RIVERS
AKWA IBOM

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47149528

Another faulty reasoning may occur when you try to understand group behaviour or properties based on the data about individuals. Social units as a whole can have properties that are not present in its components, i.e. individuals. This is called **emergent properties** or **emergence**. *It appears when individual actors operating in one social unit show more complex behaviours as a collective that is absent when they act as individual agents in a different environment.* You cannot reduce emergent properties to the properties of the individual actors (Lavakras, 2008). Ant colonies demonstrate an interesting example of emergent properties.

Ant Colonies

A single ant is a rather limited organism, with little ability to reason or accomplish complex tasks. As a whole, however, an ant colony accomplishes astounding tasks, from building hills and dams to finding and moving huge amounts of food. In this context, emergent properties are the changes that occur in ant behavior when individual ants work together.Alone, an ant behaves erratically and almost at random. But millions of random actions by thousands and thousands of ants can serve to identify necessary tasks and organize other ants to complete them. An ant that finds food, for example, secretes a small amount of a hormonal substance that attracts other ants which, in turn, also secrete that same substance when they reach the same food source. Thus, thousands of wandering ants become organized in straight lines leading to the nearest picnic. The organization of ants, which is only possible when the system works as a whole and individual actions reinforce one another, is one type of an emergent property.

https://sciencing.com/emergent-properties-8232868.html

6. Modes of Analysis

Another type of classifying analyses or statements is through modes of analysis. There are two modes of analysis, namely, descriptive and normative. Look at the following two examples:

- What sort of shopping behavior do university students exhibit?
- How should shopping behavior of university students be?

The first one is a question which can be answered by a descriptive statement. A description requires an "is" statement. The second question, however, needs an answer that requires a normative statement. A normative statement includes an "ought" statement. We can say that shopping behavior of university students ought to be rational. This states how things should be. Another example is as follows: we may ask how university students spend their weekend? If we say it is by studying, then this would be considered a descriptive statement. But if we say that they should be spending all their time studying, then this is a normative statement. So descriptive statements could be characterized as *true* or *false*, while normative statements can be characterized as *right* or *wrong*.

Social sciences focus on both "is" and "ought" statements which involve descriptive and normative analyses. Likewise, fiqh also focuses on descriptive and normative analyses which include "is" and "ought" statements. We cannot make any descriptive analysis without leading to a normative conclusion. At the same time we cannot make any normative analysis without making a descriptive one. Therefore, they are mutually inclusive as one necessitates the other. So when you go to a Muslim legal advisor (*mufti*) to ask if something is Islamically permissible or not, the first thing that the *mufti* does before answering the question is asking about the naure of the transaction? He asks this because he needs an explanation about what kind of financial transaction is under question. Another example may be euthanasia or aesthetic operation on the body. If you ask whether these are permissible to a mufti, he would first require an explanation about what euthanasia and aesthetic operation are about.

From these examples, you can see that the descriptive analysis precedes the normative one. In other words, a normative analysis requires a descriptive analysis where both are mutually linked to each other. So when a faqih judges something and makes an ought statement, he must know beforehand the descriptive analysis of the issue at hand.

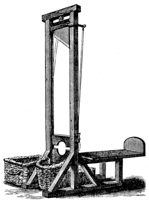
The same can be said about the "*is*" statements. A good example of this would be when Marx referred to religion as the opium of the masses. He used an "is" statement which is also called a descriptive analysis. This paves the ground for the normative conclusion that religion is an evil which *ought* to be eliminated.

Are social scientists interested only in "is" questions?

"I conceptualize the coloniality of power as an entanglement of multiple and heterogeneous hierarchies ('heterarchies') of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic, and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all other global power structures. What is new in the 'coloniality of power' perspective is how the idea of race and racism becomes the organizing principle that structures all of the multiple hierarchies of the world-system."(Grosfoguel, "World-Systems Analysis in the Context of Transmodernity, Border Thinking, and Global Coloniality," 2006: 172)

7. Hume's Guillotine: "Is-Ought" Problem

In his famous *A Treatise of Human Nature*, the 18th century Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) criticizes moral systems for relying on an imperceptible transition from "is" and "is not" statements to "ought" and "ought not" state-ments. Read Hume's following oft-cited remark about the relationship between descriptive and normative statements and try to decide your own position. Is Hume right about moral systems? Are all moral systems built on a logical gap?



"...In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation,'tis necessary that

> *it should be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention would subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.*
>
> *...Thus the course of the argument leads us to conclude, that since vice and virtue are not discoverable merely by reason, or the comparison of ideas, it must be by means of some impression or sentiment they occasion, that we are able to mark the difference betwixt them. Our decisions concerning moral rectitude and depravity are evidently perceptions; and as all perceptions are either impressions or ideas, the exclusion of the one is a convincing argument for the other. Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judg'd of; tho' this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle, that we are apt to confound it with an idea, according to our common custom of taking all things for the same, which have any near resemblance to each other. (Hume (1896). Treatise of Human Nature, p. 469-470)*

8. Interrelations between Levels of Analysis

How are units of analysis at the macro level, such as society, national governments, economic systems, and the global community, related to the units of analysis at the micro and meso levels? In the meso level, we have the nationally organized political parties, ethnic groups and religious minorities such as Christians in Turkey and Jews in Germany.

Then, at the micro level, how do you influence the global system as an individual student? Is it even possible to do so? Or is it possible for the students of a university to have an impact? What is the relation between the students of a university and actors at the meso and macro levels? Do they influence you only or is there a possibility that you can influence them? Is there a one-way influence when it comes to the likes of Coca-Cola, Facebook, Apple, national government and civilizations? Whether the Apple iPhone is influencing you and whereas you are incapable of influencing the meso and macro levels is debatable.

Some of the social theorists from different disciplines of the social sciences including economics, political science, psychology, and anthropology argue that the meso level shapes the macro level. There is under this category what is referred to as *symbolic interactionism* and *rational choice theory*. You will learn about these theories in more detail later. It is sufficient for you to know how social scientists corroborate interrelations between different levels of analysis. Some social theories see that the micro level determines the meso level such as in *functionalist social theory* and *conflict theory*. They say that conflict of interest at the micro level causes conflict between groups and at times among nations. The micro level is what in essence determines the macro level. Different theories emerged from the different types of relations they established between different levels of analysis.

One of the most debated issues in social theory is the relationship between the micro level and the macro level. Some social theorists say that individual actions determine everything that happens in the world, even when it comes to actions at the macro level. They argue that if you want to explain what is happening at the macro level, whether it be at the global, national and civilizational levels, you must look at the actions of individuals. Individual action is everything; it is what shapes everything in our social world. John Stuart Mill believed that all social behavior can be explained in terms of the psychology of the individuals rather than that of the group. For Mill, therefore, the individual is responsible for all actions at the meso and macro levels. In this sense, the micro level causes what happens at the macro and meso levels.

But then how does Emile Durkheim who disagrees with this approach establish the relationship between these different levels? According to Durkheim, society determines the actions of individuals, not vice-versa. So if you belong to a particular society, the culture of this society makes you act in a particular way. So, if you ask Durkheim why a girl covers her hair, he would say it is because she belongs to a Muslim society. Her society and culture made her act in this way. Thus, everything that is happening at the micro level can be explained by looking at a society or its culture. Durkheim emphasizes that you cannot explain what is happening in the society simply by referring to individual actions. If something is happening in the society, you should always regard society as a variable or an explanatory tool.

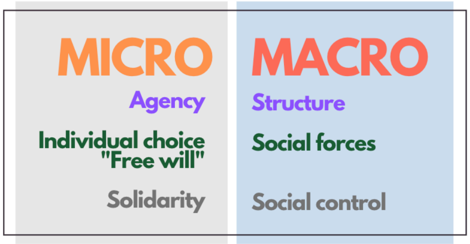
But is there any other possible way of forming a connection between the macro and micro other than saying that the individual determines society or that society determines individual actions?

9. Structure versus Agency

Agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently of social structures in making their own decisions and choices.

Structure is conceptualized as 'external' to human action (agency); it serves as constraint c activities of an independently constituted subject. (Kipo 2013)

What determines human action? To what extent do we have autonomy over our actions? Are we completely controlled by external social forces? The structure and agency debate is primarily addressing this problem. The debate is closely related to the interrelations of levels of analysis. "Agency centric" approaches highlight the capacity of individual actors to define their social actions, whereas "structure centric" approaches privilege macro and meso level social structures over the individual.



Understanding Structure and Agency Debate in Social Sciences

"The concepts of structure and agency are central to sociological theory. Structures are typically seen as the more fixed and enduring aspects of the social landscape. As used by Durkheim and others working within a similar tradition, structure is a metaphor that denotes qualities of society that are akin to the skeleton of a body in the field of anatomy, or to the frame of a building in architecture. Durkheim's work was heavily influenced by his desire to establish a sphere of study for sociology that was distinct from both biology and psychology. To this end he insisted that there are structured ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that are general throughout a society and that act as external constraints over its members. This was to emphasize the role of society in the process of causation, as opposed to individual or group agency.

Some writers taking issue with this position went to the other extreme. Weber, for example, emphasized the role of individuals and rejected the idea that terms such as ''society'' or ''group'' could refer to any reality other than that of individuals and their actions… [A]gency is conceived as the more processual, active, dimension of society – analogous to the physiology of an organism or to the activities conducted within the spaces of a building. Agency is the ability of individuals or groups, such as class movements, governments, or economic corporate bodies, to ''make things happen'' within given structural constraints and opportunities. …[The] ''middle way'' approach to structure and agency is the dominant conception in contemporary sociological theory. Now debates are less in terms of structure versus agency and more about specific emphases and the precise ways in which these two major aspects of social life affect each other or are combined. Key questions within this approach have concerned the extent to which structures constrain or determine the actions of agents, and the extent to which agents act independently of social structures.

[A. Structure]

…[T]here are two primary ways of conceptualizing structure, both deriving from Durkheim. The first is the relational notion of structure, referring to networks of social relations that tie people together into groups and social systems. These networks of interdependencies, characterized by mutual reliance within divisions of labor, are typically clustered into specialized sectors of social relations such as kinship, religion, the economy, the state, and so on. Durkheim referred to these as collective relationships. Georg Simmel similarly emphasized relationships, conceiving of society as a dynamic complex of social forms and interactions. These may involve smaller or larger numbers of people or specific types of association that structure the way that agents behave in one another's presence... The second notion of structure, the institutional, refers to the beliefs, values, symbols, ideas, and expectations that make up the mutual knowledge of members of a society and that allow them to communicate with each other. Durkheim (1984) referred to this dimension of structure as a society's collective representations. The structural functionalist tradition associated with the work of Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, and others, captured this aspect of structure under the rubric of ''social institutions.'' Other writers emphasized cultural patterns. Parsons's focus was on the rules and normative expectations into which agents were socialized as children, and on their adaptation to the various roles and positions they occupied as adults.…Both approaches to structure are compatible with another metaphor routinely associated with structure: pattern. The notion of a pattern is often included in the very definition of structure. For example, social structure may be seen as ''a system of patterned relationships of actors in their capacity as playing roles relative to one another'' (Parsons 1945). Such patterns can be produced by agents acting in accordance with normative expectations, as in the institutional version of structure, or in accordance with the requirements of mutual interdependence, as in the relational view of structure. Both notions exist side by side in many theoretical traditions…The two notions of structure, relational and institutional, are clearly not mutually exclusive. The precise way in which the two notions should be combined is, however, a much more complex question.

Structures mold, constrain, and determine the actions of agents. This substantive privileging of structure over agency is often associated with structuralist writers such as Claude Levi Strauss, Roland Barthes, and Louis Althusser, who tended to treat agents as the mere ''bearers'' of structures, and with Michel Foucault, whose emphasis on the overwhelming force and imposition of discursive regimes (institutional structure) and multiple power relations (relational structure) led him to pronounce the death of the subject or agent.

[B. Agency]

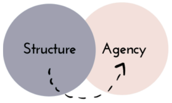
Agency theorists have asserted that structural approaches fail to recognize how agents are involved in the production of structured patterns or of social change. From the founding texts of sociology through the 1960s, a variety of ways of establishing and conceptualizing the autonomy of agency have been offered. Two overlapping traditions have dominated. One – the tradition of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism – includes Mead, Blumer, and Goffman (although, intriguingly, Goffman also borrowed heavily from Durkheim). The other includes Weber, Schutz, Berger and Luckmann, and Garfinkel in the neo Kantian and phenomenological traditions. Their common emphasis is on the internal makeup of agents and action. They assumed from the start that agents and their actions were not subjugated to structures, and thus set out to explore their key characteristics. Weber, for example, distinguished between four different types of social action: instrumentally rational action geared towards ''the attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends''; value rational action, which is pursued for reasons of personally held value irrespective of the prospects for success of that action; affectual action, determined by the actor's emotional states and orientations; and traditional action, ''determined by ingrained habituation'' (Weber 1968: 24–5).

[C. Integrating Agency and Structure]

Bourdieu, Giddens, and Jürgen Habermas are major contemporary theorists who have each attempted to synthesize the two notions of structure and the two traditions of agency outlined above. The syntheses are facilitated by philosophical insights that help to both reveal and refine previous oversimplifications of core concepts. Each combines structure and agency in a more nuanced and inclusive manner than their predecessors. Each emphasizes not only structures external to agents, and the stocks of knowledge possessed by agents, but also the social origins and grounding of agents' knowledgeability. The key mediating concepts are habitus for Bourdieu, practical consciousness for Giddens, and the phenomenological lifeworld for Habermas." (Ritzer 2007: 4869-4871)

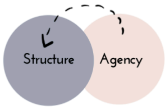
Agency Centric	Structure Centric	Synthesis
Symbolic interactionism, phenomenological George Mead, Herbert Blumer, Erving Goffman,Weber, Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, and Harold Garfinkel	**Structuralism** Claude Lé vi Strauss, Roland Barthes, Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault	**Habitus** Bourdieu **Structuration theory/ Practical consciousness** Anthony Giddens **Phenomenological lifeworld** Jürgen Habermas

Figure 5.6: Comparing agency and structure centric approaches

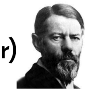


(1) The "structural-emphasis" perspective (Durkheim)

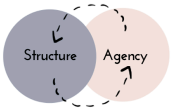
-Powerful "structures" are dominant and responsible for orchestrating the conduct of human individuals.



(2) The "agency-centric" perspective (Weber)



-Society is a result of human creativity, rationality and autonomy.



(3) Attempts to bridge "structure" and "agency" (Giddens, Bourdieu)

-Both "structures" and human "agency" are important in the explanation of social life and organization.

Figure 5.7: Structure-agency debate

Individualism and Holism:
Mill versus Durkheim on Suicide

“Mill's psychologism, which in the final analysis attempts to explain all social behavior in terms of the psychology of individuals rather than the social group, identifies him as a methodological individualist. Mill's position puts him on one side of a debate that continues to divide individualists and holists today.

Durkheim is an important representative of the other, holistic, side. Durkheim strongly denies that all social phenomena can be explained solely in terms of individual psychological phenomena. Durkheim maintains that there are social facts, that is, facts that pertain to society rather than to individual members of society, and in order to give a complete causal explanation of social facts, we must invoke other social facts as causes, Moreover; he says that social facts are not reducible to facts about individuals' psychological makeup or intentions.

Although Conte, who was also a holist, preceded Durkheim by several generations; Durkheim is often called the father of sociology, in part because of his more strident insistence on the primacy of the social over the individual; more importantly though, Durkheim was the first person to publish a work that applied the new science of statistics to a social problem. This work Suicide appeared in 1897.

Durkheim developed his views about the distinctness and importance of social facts through trying to understand such problems as the difference in rates of suicide in various parts of Europe when the individual reasons offered for suicide were much the same throughout the continent. Durkheim's use of statistics to study suicide was possible because from the early 19th century governments had collected for administrative purposes massive amounts of information about the peoples that they governed. Besides the basic census counts of births, deaths, marriages, occupation and religion, which were already recognized as important for actuarial science and "political arithmetic" in the 17th century, governments began keep descriptive statistics (counts) of diverse phenomena ranging from matters related to public health (such as numbers of prostitutes and incidence of venereal disease) to the administration of justice (numbers of various types of crime) and even postal administration (numbers of dead letters). Studies of these statistics yielded surprising regularities in rates of some types of events, which suggested to some the possibility of statistical laws that worked in mysterious ways to determine what happened in the world. The appearance of so many regularities also led people, such as Quetelet, to try to understand the nature of the departure from the normal. Although the methods for gathering, recording and organizing data were crude, there was a great deal of information available to scholars who wanted to examine public records. Durkheim had access to records of suicides and attempted suicides—which were considered criminal activities—that identified "causes" of the suicides, as determined from interviews with survivors, notes left by the suicides, testimony of friends or relatives, or remarks of the investigating police officer.

Durkheim begins his study of suicide by eliminating various proposals that ascribe suicide to extra-social factors, such as individual psychopathology, heredity, geography, and climate. When all such plausible individual and external candidates have been shown not to account for the differing rates of suicide in, for example, northern and southern Europe, Durkheim looks at the different rates of suicide in relation to social phenomena such as religious, political, and national affiliation, and marital and family status. He then identifies (or, more accurately, formulates) distinct social types of suicide, including egoistic, altruistic and anomic suicide. He links to the different types to varying degrees and types of social integration. Egoistic suicide for example is the most common type of suicide, and it is the type that occurs when the individual suffers alienation as a result of not being sufficiently integrated into his or her social group. Altruistic suicide, in contrast, occurs as a result of over-integration, as when the brave soldier throws himself on an explosive device in order to save his comrades. Through classifying different types of suicide, Durkheim can account for observed phenomena, such as the relatively higher rate of (egoistic) suicide in Protestant northern Europe than in largely Catholic southern Europe. The differing degrees of integration into religious or family life among various societies result from difference in social structures, and facts about social structures are not facts about individuals. Some structures promote integration; others discourage it. In Durkheim's Europe, social integration is a bigger problem for Protestants than for Catholics for several reasons. The austerity of the Protestant religion, its emphasis on the individual's relationship with God, its lack of the sacrament of penance and forgiveness, its denial of the possibility that a priest or saints in heaven can intervene for the sinner, and the especially fearsome possibility that one might not be a member of the Elect—all of these Durkheim takes as features of a social structure that tends to isolate its individual members. He argues that this lack of integration is a social fact that makes, under similar psychological and external conditions, suicide more likely for the afflicted Protestant than for the Catholic. The result is the social fact of a higher rate of suicide in Protestant countries than in Catholic ones...

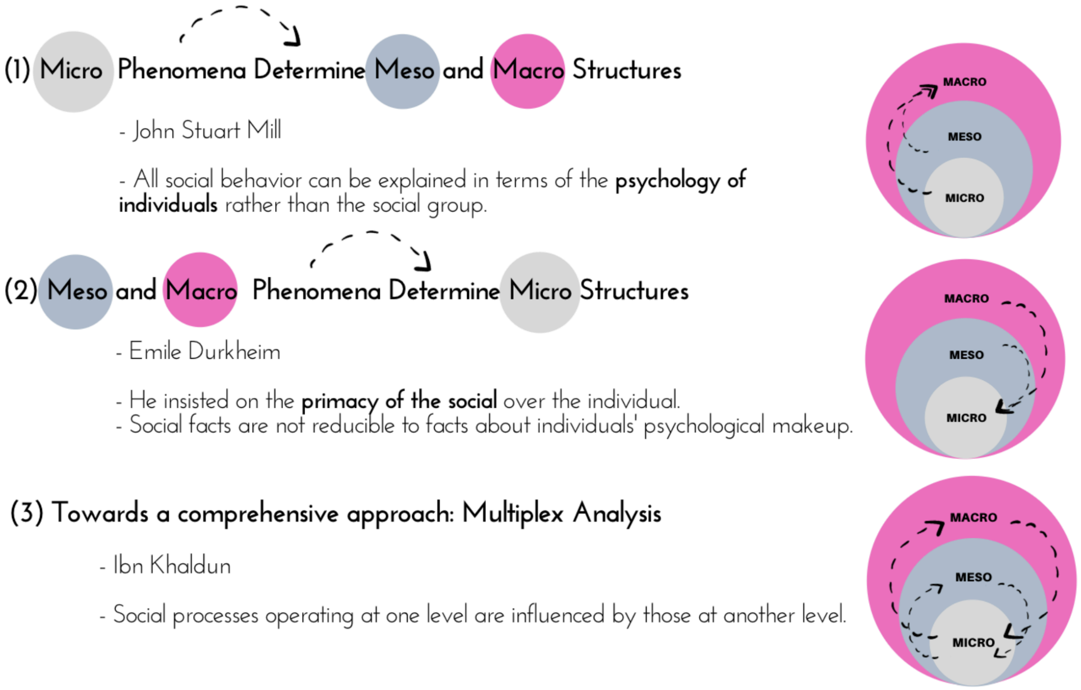
...Holism appeals to those who are interested in maintaining the independence of the social sciences as separate disciplines, not capable of being absorbed into or reduced to psychology or biology. Disciplinary territorial disputes are fairly common when a discipline is relatively new; anthropology is a good example, and some anthropologists believe that the existence of non-reducible social facts justify their study in a discipline separate from psychology. Strong support for Durkheim's holism probably springs from such motives in the work of the twentieth-century social anthropologist, A.R. RadcliffeBrown (1881-1955). He believes that social laws can be discovered through comparative studies of societies, and tries to explain social institutions and customs on the basis of the social functions that they fulfill. He is adamant about anthropology's ability to provide, by means of these functional explanations, information about societies that is not reducible to information about the individuals that make up the society. Not all functional anthropologists are holists, however. B. Malinowski (1884-1942) for example, argues that all social behavior ultimately derives from attempts to satisfy basic individual needs, such as the needs for food, shelter, and reproduction. Other derived functions are present in societies as well, but the biological and psychological functions form the basis for everything else. Today most scholars regard the position of ontological holism as indefensible, but both methodological holism and methodological individualism continue to find adherents among anthropologists and sociologists." (Salmon 2010)

10. Ibn Khaldūn's Circular Causality

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the micro and macro levels mutually affect each other in a circular way. As luxury increases in a society (macro-level) corruption among individuals increases (micro-level). Corruption among individuals (micro-level) culminates in the corruption of the city in general (macro-level).

"When luxury and prosperity prevail in a society, it naturally causes it to follow the ways of sedentary culture and adopt its customs. Sedentary culture is the adoption of diversified luxuries, the cultivation of the things that go with them and the addiction to the crafts that give elegance to all the various kinds of luxury, such as the crafts of cooking, dressmaking, building, and all other parts of domestic economy. Luxury associated with sedentary culture corrupts individuals for two main reasons.

The first reason is that the expenditures of the inhabitants of a city mount with the diversification of sedentary culture. As a result, a man's income is not sufficient to satisfy the needs caused by their luxury customs. Therefore, immorality, wrongdoing, insincerity, and trickery, for the purposes of making a living in a proper or an improper manner, increase among individuals. The soul comes to think about making a living and to use all possible trickery for that purpose. Eventually, this becomes a custom and trait of character with most individuals.



(1) Micro Phenomena Determine Meso and Macro Structures

- John Stuart Mill

- All social behavior can be explained in terms of the **psychology of individuals** rather than the social group.

(2) Meso and Macro Phenomena Determine Micro Structures

- Emile Durkheim

- He insisted on the **primacy of the social** over the individual.
- Social facts are not reducible to facts about individuals' psychological makeup.

(3) Towards a comprehensive approach: Multiplex Analysis

- Ibn Khaldun

- Social processes operating at one level are influenced by those at another level.

Figure 5.8: Three approaches to micro-macro linkage

The second reason is that the great luxury that prevails leads to a disposition toward pleasures and indulgence in them. It leads to diversification of the desires of the belly for pleasurable food and drink. This is followed by diversification of the pleasures of sex through various ways of sexual intercourse, such as adultery and homosexuality. The city, then, teems with low people of blameworthy character. Thus, the affairs of the people are in disorder, and if the affairs of individuals one by one deteriorate, the town becomes disorganized and falls into ruins.

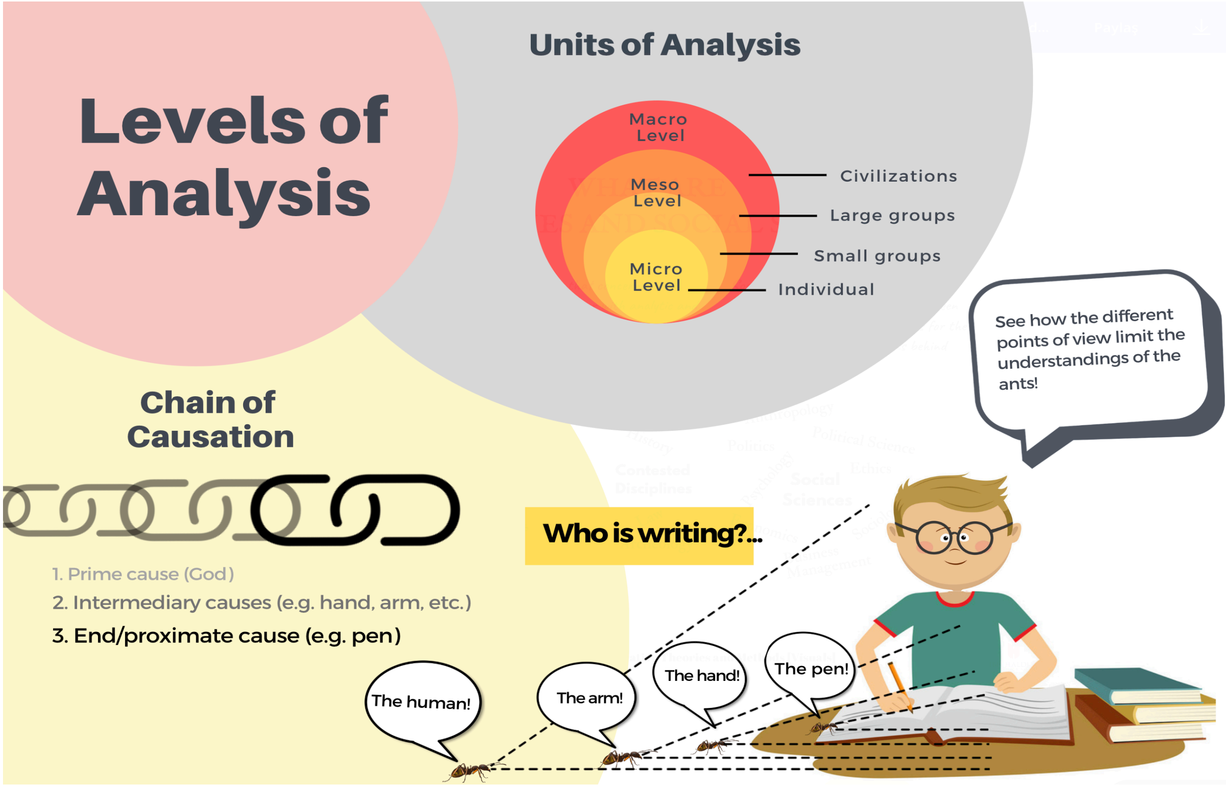
Finally, corruption of individuals culminates in corruption of the city generally. Man is a man only in as much as he is able to procure for himself useful things and to repel harmful things, and in as much as his character is suited to making efforts to this effect. When the strength of a man and then his character and religion are corrupted, his humanity is corrupted, and he becomes, in effect, transformed into an animal.

The following excerpt is from the *Mathnawi* of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad al-Rūmī al-Balkhī (1207-1273) who is popularly known as Rumi. He was originally born in Balkh, a province in Afghanistan today, but spent most of his life in Konya, the capital of Saljuqs, where he migrated when he was around fourteen and lived there until the end of his life. The Masnawi, written in Persian, is considered to be one of the greatest books of Islamic civilization. Its fame has transcended the borders of Islamic Civilization and even today is referred as “best-selling poet” in western countries.

An ant walking on a piece of paper

A little ant saw a pen writing on paper, and told this mystery to another ant, saying, “That pen made wonderful pictures like sweet basil and beds of lilies and roses”. The other ant said, “That artist is the finger, and this pen is actually no more than the derivative instrument and the sign.” A third ant said, “It is the work of the arm, by whose strength the slender finger depicted it.” The argument continued in this fashion until a chief of the ants, who was a little bit sagacious, said, “Do not regard this accomplishment as proceeding from the material form, which becomes unconscious in sleep and death. Form is like a garment or a staff: bodily figures do not move except by means of the intellect and spirit.”

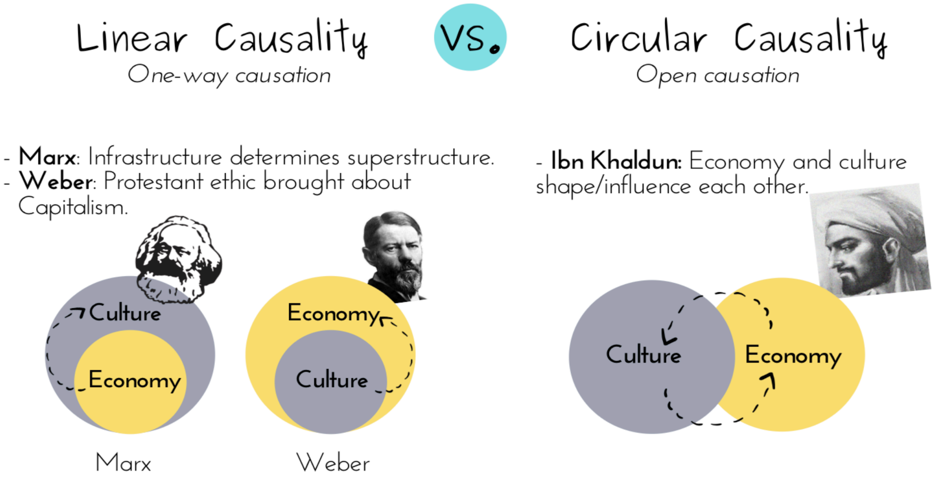
He, the wise ant, was unaware that without the controlling influence of God that the intellect and heart (mind) would be inert. If He withdraws His favor from it for a single moment, the acute intellect will commit many follies.


Levels of Analysis
Units of Analysis
Macro Level
Meso Level
Micro Level
Civilizations
Large groups
Small groups
Individual
Chain of Causation
Who is writing?...
The human!
The arm!
The hand!
The pen!

1. Prime cause (God)
2. Intermediary causes (e.g. hand, arm, etc.)
3. End/proximate cause (e.g. pen)

See how the different points of view limit the understandings of the ants!

Figure 5.8: Units of analysis and chain of causation through the ant example


Linear Causality
One-way causation
VS.
Circular Causality
Open causation
Culture
Economy
Economy
Culture
Marx
Weber
Culture
Economy

- **Marx**: Infrastructure determines superstructure.
- **Weber**: Protestant ethic brought about Capitalism.

- **Ibn Khaldun:** Economy and culture shape/influence each other.

Figure 5.9: How are the levels connected to each other?

Key Words

unit of analysis	is the subject that you want to say something about as a result of your inquiry.
levels of analysis	refers to the three main analytical levels (micro, meso and macro) with which a social scientist can approach a phenomenon.
dyad	is a two-member social group.
triad	is a social unit comprised of three members.
ecological fallacy	is a fallacious inference made about an individual based on group data
emergent properties or **emergence**	refer to qualities of a social group that are not present in its components
***is* statements**	are descriptive statements that can be characterized as true or false.
***ought* statements**	normative statements can be characterized as *right* or *wrong*.

Summary

- Same phenomenon can be studied at multiple levels.
- Unit of analysis is a basic element of a research and prerequisite for research design.
- Each unit of analysis fall under one of the three main levels of analysis, namely, micro, meso and macro.

- Micro level of analyses study interactions of individuals, small groups (dyads, triads, families and so on) and local communities.
- Mesor level of analyses examine intermediate-sized social units such as country-wide institutions, groups (social classes, ethnicities, religious minorities and so on) and different organization.
- Macro level of analyses the interactions at the broadest level including interrelationships between national systems, countries, cultures, global organizations and corporations, and international alliances.
- Ecological fallacy occurs when you make inferences about individuals based on group level data.
- Social units as a whole can have properties that are not present in its components and this is called emergent properties.
- Social sciences deal with two sort of statements: descriptice (is) and normative (ought) statements.
- "Structure versus agency" debate is central to sociological theory.
- Some social scientists have emphasized human "agency" in social life by stressing the ability of individuals to exercise free-will, make choices and decisions, whereas others have regarded social structure more determining.

Dig Deep

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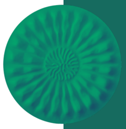
MODULE 3



MODULE

3

CHAPTER 6
Materialism and Positivist Approaches

CHAPTER 7
Postpositivism: A Critique From Within

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- appreciate how positivism as a paradigm conceives the world;
- understand how the different streams of rationalism and empiricism came together to form logical positivism;
- explain the hypothetico-deductive method and how it is used under positivist assumptions;
- distiguish the limitations of verification and the use of falsification;
- know the concepts of reliability and validity;
- explain and articulate the steps of positivist methodology used in research.

Chapter Six

POSITIVISM

Focus Questions

- ◊ What is positivism?
- ◊ What is logical positivism?
- ◊ How did Karl Popper modify the method of logical positivists?
- ◊ What are the quantitative methods to guide research?
- ◊ What is the difference between induction and deduction?
- ◊ What is positivist approach to reality and knowledge?
- ◊ What are the basic principles that positivists adhere to in their methods and procedures to attain the truth?

Positivism is the most hegemonic approach in the world today. It is also heavily criticized. Despite the many criticisms made against positivism, it is still the most prevalent and common approach in both the natural and the social sciences. The positivist approach can be identified by its ontological claim on a single, identifiable reality. There are a variety of positions and approaches among which positivists and others assume, a matter which we will be discussing throughout the course, but for pedagogical and analytical purposes we have reduced the content to reflect the major characteristics of positivism.

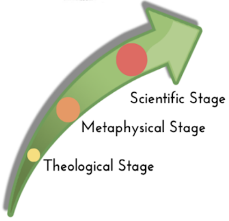
Positivism is based on the claim that the "truth" transcends opinion and personal bias (Carey 1989: 99). The basic assumption underlying research inspired by this paradigm is the notion of a single, objective reality that we can observe, know and measure (Lincoln et al 2011: 102). Inspired by Auguste Comte, and later by the Vienna Circle of the 1920s, the positivist paradigm in the social sciences assumes that "scientific research is a "hypothetical-deductive" process that builds knowledge by systematically testing a hypothesis and eliminating those that are found false" (Packer 2011: 20).

The positivist worldview aims to achieve a “value-free objectivist-science” (Carey 1989: 104). Any disclosure or attempt to self-critique a researcher’s own moral and political commitments in their own work is out of concern. “People and their behaviors become objects for study, with the researcher maintaining as much distance from the researched as is possible, so as to remain objective” (Merriam 1991: 45). Minimizing the role of the researcher, scholars who adopt this approach defined research as “the use of scientific, standardized procedures in search for knowledge” (Brunner 1959: 1).

Positivism is a research paradigm which aims to **discover** the LAWS behind social action and phenomena.

Auguste Comte is considered as the founder of positivism.

- For him, **society** operates according to general **universal laws** like **nature**. Social scientific inquiry aims to **uncover** these laws.
- He coined the term '**sociology**' in 1838.
- He believed that society passes through 3 stages: **theological metaphysical**, and **scientific**.

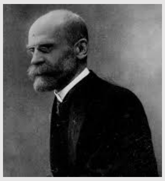


“Observations should be self-evidently true, incorrigible, that is to say, requiring no interpretation or prior knowledge” (Packer 2011: 24). In order to ensure unbiased empirical data, unambiguous language is needed for observation. Concepts should be defined operationally in terms of procedures of observation and measurement (Packer 2011: 24). The gist of this methodology is to achieve interpretation-free observations and logical inferences. Accordingly, there is one science, whose principles for inquiry need to proceed according to the same methods to achieve the greatest clarity and to arrive at a single truth. The con-tention of the positivist paradigm is that scientific knowledge is objective and general, impersonal and detached. The subjectivity of the researcher is not denied, but it is treated as a potential problem; in other words, as an error (Kucukural 2014: 57).

One of the early representatives of this approach was Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Very much inspired by the natural sciences and highly influential during his time, Durkheim alongside Auguste Comte and Saint-Simone had laid the foundations of the social sciences as an objective science of society. Durkheim treated social facts as things. With him social scientists began regarding social facts as realities "that is, as having characteristics independent of his conceptual apparatus, which can only be ascertained through empirical investigation" (Lukes 1982: 2-3). Durkheim elevated the realm of the social as the subject matter of an independent science. He relates 'facts' and conception of 'social' as follows:

> Here, then, is a category of facts which present very special characteristics: they consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him. Consequently, since they consist of representations and actions, they cannot be confused with organic phenomena, nor with psychical phenomena, which have no existence save in and through the individual consciousness. Thus they constitute a new species and to them must be exclusively assigned the term social. (Durkheim 1982: 52)

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)



French social scientist who contributed to the development of positivist methodology combining empirical research with sociological theory. After Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and Henri Saint-Simone (1760-1825), he is commonly seen as the founder of the positivist sociology.

In a nutshell, the positivist paradigm can be identified by its rigorous effort to reach the truth. The possibility of reaching the truth is a matter of debate, but in conducting research you can identify this paradigm by its belief and expec-tation that by following true procedures researchers can obtain knowledge about the world that is at once true, universal and generalizable. Even though positivists treat the issue of subjectivity of the researcher as an "error," they strive to compensate for this by demanding that the researcher take their subjectivity into account. In other words, the positivist paradigm asks the re-searcher to question the effects of which his or her perspective may have on the research process, therefore requiring that the researcher be self-reflexive. As a result, this prepares the grounds for the interpretative and critical app-roaches that come out of the positivist paradigm which we will discuss later.

Where does positivist approach come from? We will explore below its historical background. You will learn the early debates between rationalists and empiricists and logical positivism of the Vienna Circle. Next, you will consider Popper's critique and modification. Finally, you will delve into positivist methods in some detail.

1. Historical Background

The dispute between rationalist and empiricist scholars is an old one. It is a debate common to ancient Greek, Indian, Chinese and Islamic philosophy. It is moreover known to have reappeared in the early Enlightenment period. The early Enlightenment can be characterized by a multiplicity of currents of thought and debates. Romanticism, humanism, realism, liberalism and many other schools of thought which we know today were originated in those days. Republic of Letters is a phrase that was coined to describe the vibrant intellectual atmosphere of the time.

What is the Republic of Letters?

Republic of Letters is a phrase describing the phenomenon of increased correspondence in the form of letters exchanged between the influential philosophers and other thinkers during the Age of Enlightenment. It is commonly used to denote a notion of an imaginary space where free-thinking people can exchange ideas. The Republic of Letters began as a network of private correspondence and evolved into the more complex and institutionalised system of newspapers and academic journals.

Source: https://www.republic-of-letters.com/?page=what_is_the_republic_of_letters The picture retrieved form: https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-republic-of-letters-review-a-network-of-open-minds-11545766414

One of the critical debates between rationalists and empiricists had paved the way for today's positivism. The disagreement between rationalists and empiricists primarily revolves around the sources of our concepts and knowledge and the extent to which we are dependent upon sense experience in our effort to gain knowledge.

Rationalists like Rene Descartes (1596-1650) claim that there are significant ways in which our concepts and knowledge are gained independently of sense experience. We gain truths by intuition or deduction or through some innate knowledge. Knowledge is the result of the human innate capacity for reason. Our knowledge is *a priori*, which means before the observation. Our senses obviously deceive us according to rationalists.

René Descartes (1596-1650)

A rationalist French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher.

Empiricists such as John Locke (1632-1704) and David Hume claim that sense experience is the ultimate source of know-ledge including the concepts that we derive. "Our knowled-ge is a posteriori, dependent up-on sense experience" (Markie 2017). Empiricists believe that our mind can deceive us. So any knowledge that is not based on our senses is illegitimate, invalid, and not scientific. Scientific knowledge for empiricists is based on measurement derived from observation; if something cannot be measured, it cannot be the subject of scientific inquiry.

David Hume (1711-1776)

Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist. Hume was famously known for his philosophical empiricism and skepticism who saw philosophy as a science that studied human nature inductively.

Historically, the rationalist and empiricist dispute in epistemology has extended into the area of metaphysics, where philosophers are concerned with the basic nature of reality, including the existence of God and such aspects of our nature as free will and the relation between the mind and body. However, this book focuses on this debate to expose background and philosophical origins of today's positivist method. This debate was resolved and the agreement comprised the basic position of logical positivism.

2. Logical Positivism: The Synthesis of Rationalism and Empiricism

Logical positivism emerged as a model of science in the 20th century through the efforts of a group of scientists, mathematicians, and philosophers who had formed what they called the Vienna Circle (meeting regularly from 1924 to 1936 at the University of Vienna). Their objective was, by way of a theory of meaning, to combine both empiricism and positivism or more specifically mathematical logic in order to formalize their empirical findings. Logical positivism defined the roles for which both experience and reason was to have in science. While the former manifests in observations and the rigorous work for measurements, the later is epitomised in the form of logic and statistical testings. If the hypothesis is a speculative statement based on your observations, its testing is a logical activity that goes hand in hand with mathematical precision of statistical techniques. In logical positivism, logic and mathematics provide the form, while observations its content.

All scientific investigation employs the methodology of logical procedures for testing hypotheses for research in both the natural and the social sciences, which is akin to randomized clinical trials that serve as the "gold standard". Anything related to "metaphysics" should be avoided because they involve untestable presumptions about the kinds of entities that do not exist. For positivists, at the core of scientific inquiry there exists empirical observations and logical processes.

Randomised Clinical Trial

The U.S. Department of Education considered Randomised Clinical Trial "as the main sign that a study is supported by "strong evidence." In the department's view, "All evidence is NOT created equal" (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), and the evidence from a randomized clinical trial is much stronger than evidence from other kinds of investigations (Packer 2011: 19). Rules of randomised clinical trial shows how proper scientific research is conducted in positivist approach. It sets the "gold standard" for research in the social sciences, and is believed to have the necessary rigor for true scientific research. It involves direct manipulation, or intervention of the researcher, objective measurement, and statistical testing of hypotheses.

The Elements of a Randomized Clinical Trial

It evaluates a *treatment* (a medicine, an intervention) intended to change people (improve health, foster learning)
By *comparing* two or more groups, only one of which receives the treatment
The participants are *assigned* randomly to these groups in order to control for unknown variables.
The outcomes are *measured* with appropriate tests and instruments.
The *null hypothesis* is that the treatment has no effect.
No effect means that any differences among the groups in measures of the *dependent variables* are caused by chance alone.
Analysis takes the form of statistical tests to decide how probable it is that the differences are caused by chance alone and thus how *significant* there differences are.
Source: Martin Packer, 2011, p. 20.

The rise of logical positivism as seen by its advocates is a type of reconstruction of science. For logical positivists, scientific research must use three criteria so as to be qualified as a true scientific endeavor. Any scientific activity without these criteria are regarded as non-scientific. These three criteria are as follows:

1. The first criterion: *Distinguishing between "meaningful" and "meaningless" statements*. The criterion here is whether or not a statement could be tested using either empirical or rational procedures.

Examples:

"The moon is round": meaningful because it can be tested empirically.

"All life is but a void": meaningless because it cannot be tested.

2. The second criterion: *Clarifying the role of observation in science.* The positivists propose that reports of observable phenomena give

us what are referred to as the "protocol sentences" which provide the empirical basis for any science.

3. The third criterion: *Building the basic data inductively into coherent theoretical statements using the laws of formal logic*. The rules of formal logic could be used to combine protocol sentences and produce increasingly complicated statements, culminating in the general theoretical statements that are scientific laws (Packer 2011).

These three criteria are considered to be the main principles for the logical positivists' reconstruction project of science.

2.1. Limitations of Logical Positivism

Logical positivists propose that a meaningful statement is one that has a method of verification. But this is criticized because it excludes the following:

- Universal claims: "All swans are white" is impossible to verify but hardly meaningless.
- Historical theoretical statements, such as: "The universe once had a diameter of one meter."
- Speculative counterfactuals, such as: "If the moon were hit by a sufficiently large asteroid, it would collide with the earth."
- Hypothetical counterfactuals: "If the moon were plastic, its orbit would be..."

The verification criterion was itself meaningless by its own definition because it could not be verified. It soon became clear that, as far as the physical and natural sciences were concerned, the logical empiricist model was highly inaccurate. Despite this, logical positivism became highly influential among investigators of psychological, social, and cultural phenomena, who were keen on having the status of scientists.

3. Karl Popper's Modification: Hypothetico-Deductive Logic

Karl Popper (1902-1994) rejected logical positivism mainly on the ground that verification of universal laws is impossible. His main objection to the logical positivist model of science was due to the fact that reasoning by induction can never lead to certainty.

A general statement – one with the form "All X are Y" – can never be finally demonstrated to be true. If I see one white swan after another, inductive reasoning will lead me to conclude that all swans are white. I may feel increasingly confident of this conclusion as more white swans appear, but I can never be certain because there may still be a black swan lurking out of sight. But we can, Popper pointed out, be certain when such a statement is false. A single black swan will "falsify" the statement "All swans are white." Popper argued that certainty, not probability, is the goal of scientific research, and that science requires a "critical attitude" that seeks to test and falsify laws, not a "dogmatic attitude" that seeks to verify and confirm them (Popper 1959: 1963). The criterion for a meaningful scientific statement is not that it can be verified but that it can be falsified. In place of inductive reasoning, Popper proposed a logic of falsification, of the testing of hypotheses. Popper insisted on a distinction between "the context of discovery" and "the logic of validation." There are all sorts of ways for a scientist to invent or guess at a hypothesis, but imagination, speculation, and invention are not part of the logic of science. Science, as a rational activity, is about hypothesis testing, not hypothesis generation. Science, Popper insisted, follows a "hypothetico-deductive" logic (Popper, 1959; cited in Packer 2011: 27).

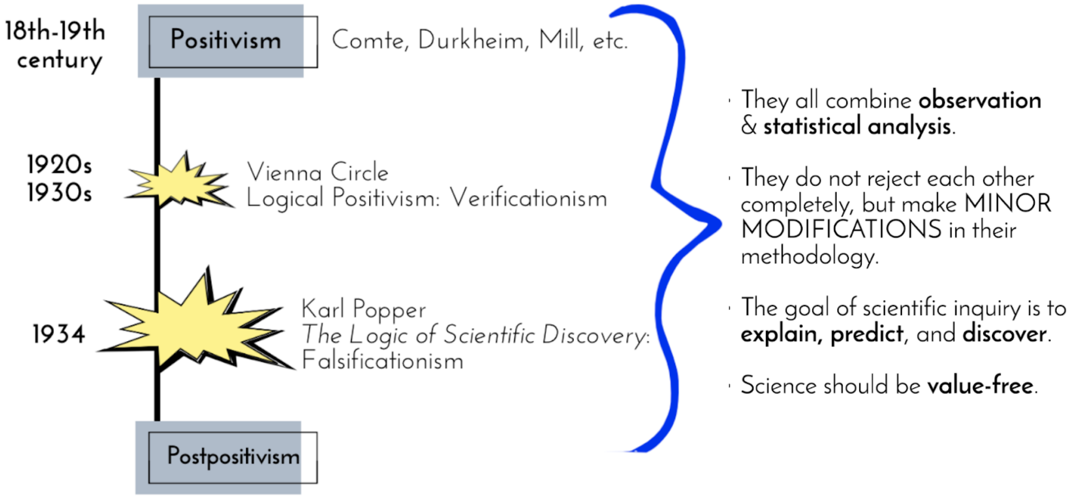

18th-19th century
Positivism
Comte, Durkheim, Mill, etc.
1920s 1930s
Vienna Circle
Logical Positivism: Verificationism
1934
Karl Popper
The Logic of Scientific Discovery: Falsificationism
Postpositivism
They all combine observation & statistical analysis.
They do not reject each other completely, but make MINOR MODIFICATIONS in their methodology.
The goal of scientific inquiry is to explain, predict, and discover.
Science should be value-free.

Figure 6.1: History of positivism

The Problem of Induction**

According to a widely accepted view—to be opposed in this book — the empirical sciences can be characterized by the fact that they use ‘inductive methods’, as they are called. According to this view, the logic of scientific discovery would be identical with inductive logic, i.e. with the logical analysis of these inductive methods. It is usual to call an inference ‘inductive’ if it passes from singular principle of induction (which he formulated as the ‘principle of universal causation’) to be ‘a priori valid’. But I do not think that his ingenious attempt to provide an a priori justification for synthetic statements was successful.

> There can be no statements in science which cannot be tested, and therefore none which cannot in principle be refuted, by falsifying some of the conclusions which can be deduced from them.*
>
> *Karl Popper. The Logic of Scientific Discovery. London. 1959. p. 25.

My own view is that the various difficulties of inductive logic here sketched are insurmountable. So also, I fear, are those inherent in the doctrine, so widely current today, that inductive inference, although not ‘strictly valid’, can attain some degree of ‘reliability’ or of ‘probability’. According to this doctrine, inductive inferences are ‘probable inferences’. ‘We have described’, says Reichenbach, ‘the principle of induction as the means whereby science decides upon truth. To be more exact, we should say that it serves to decide upon probability. For it is not given to science to reach either truth or falsity . . . but scientific statements can only attain continuous degrees of probability whose unattainable upper and lower limits are truth and falsity’. At this stage I can disregard the fact that the believers in inductive logic entertain an idea of probability that I shall later reject as highly unsuitable for their own purposes. I can do so because the difficulties mentioned are not even touched by an appeal to probability. For if a certain degree of probability is to be assigned to statements based on inductive inference, then this will have to be justified by invoking a new principle of induction, appropriately modified. And this new principle in its turn will have to be justified, and so on. Nothing is gained, moreover, if the principle of induction, in its turn, is taken not as ‘true’ but only as ‘probable’. In short, like every other form of inductive logic, the logic of probable inference, or ‘probability logic’, leads either to an infinite regress, or to the doctrine of apriorism. The theory to be developed in the following pages stands directly opposed to all attempts to operate with the ideas of inductive logic. It might be described as the theory of the deductive method of testing, or as the view that a hypothesis can only be empirically tested—and only after it has been advanced. Before I can elaborate this view (which might be called 'deductivism', in contrast to 'inductivism') I must first make clear the distinction between the psychology of knowledge which deals with empirical facts, and the logic of knowledge which is concerned only with logical relations. For the belief in inductive logic is largely due to a confusion of psychological problems with epistemological ones. It may be worth noticing, by the way, that this confusion spells trouble not only for the logic of knowledge but for its psychology as well.

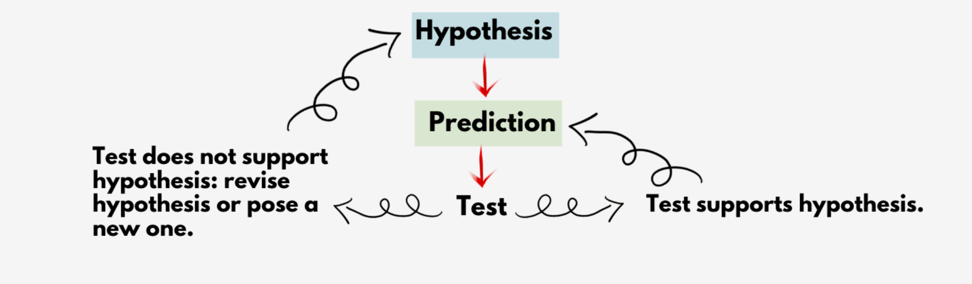

Hypothesis
Prediction
Test
Test does not support hypothesis: revise hypothesis or pose a new one.
Test supports hypothesis.

Figure 6.2: Steps for Popper's Hypothetico-deductive Logic

Elimination of Psychologism***

I said above that the work of the scientist consists in putting forward and testing theories. The initial stage, the act of conceiving or inventing a theory, seems to me neither to call for logical analysis nor to be susceptible of it. The question how it happens that a new idea occurs to a man— whether it is a musical theme, a dramatic conflict, or a scientific theory—may be of great interest to empirical psychology; but it is irrelevant to the logical analysis of scientific knowledge. This latter is concerned not with questions of fact (Kant's quid facti?), but only with questions of justification or validity (Kant's quid juris?). Its questions are of the following kind. Can a statement be justified? And if so, how? Is it testable? Is it logically dependent on certain other statements? Or does it perhaps contradict them? In order that a statement may be logically examined in this way, it must already have been presented to us. Someone must have formulated it, and submitted it to logical examination. Accordingly I shall distinguish sharply between the process of conceiving a new idea, and the methods and results of examining it logically. As to the task of the logic of knowledge—in contradistinction to the psychology of knowledge—I shall proceed on the assumption that it consists solely in investigating the methods employed in those systematic tests to which every new idea must be subjected if it is to be seriously entertained. Some might object that it would be more to the purpose to regard it as the business of epistemology to produce what has been called a 'rational reconstruction' of the steps that have led the scientist to a discovery—to the finding of some new truth. But the question is: what, precisely, do we want to reconstruct? If it is the processes involved in the stimulation and release of an inspiration which are to be reconstructed, then I should refuse to take it as the task of the logic of knowledge. Such processes are the concern of empirical psychology but hardly of logic. It is another matter if we want to reconstruct rationally the subsequent tests whereby the inspiration may be discovered to be a discovery, or become known to be knowledge. In so far as the scientist critically judges, alters, or rejects his own inspiration we may, if we like, regard the methodological analysis undertaken here as a kind of 'rational reconstruction' of the corresponding thoughtprocesses. But this reconstruction would not describe these processes as they actually happen: it can give only a logical skeleton of the procedure of testing. Still, this is perhaps all that is meant by those who speak of a 'rational reconstruction' of the ways in which we gain knowledge. It so happens that my arguments in this book are quite independent of this problem. However, my view of the matter, for what it is worth, is that there is no such thing as a logical method of having new ideas, or a logical reconstruction of this process. My view may be expressed by saying that every discovery contains 'an irrational element', or 'a creative intuition', in Bergson's sense. In a similar way Einstein speaks of the 'search for those highly universal laws . . . from which a picture of the world can be obtained by pure deduction. There is no logical path', he says, 'leading to these . . . laws. They can only be reached by intuition, based upon something like an intellectual love ('Einfühlung') of the objects of experience.'

** Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London, 1959, p. 3-7.
*** Karl Popper*, The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London, 1959, p. 7-9.

4. Positivist Methods: Method of Hypothesis Testing

How do positivists claim to achieve objective knowledge? How do they actually perform hypothetico-deductive reasoning? In order to understand the method employed by positivists you need to grasp the procedures of scientific research. However, before we show you how a typical positivist research is conducted, you need to understand some of the key concepts relevant to positivist study. Reliability, validity, operational definitions and hypotheses are some of the concepts that demonstrate how positivists strive to eliminate the effect of subjectivity and reach universal conclusions in research. The following four concepts have a key role in positivist thinking and method:

Reliability: Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. It ensures the reliability of the instrument that is being used for measurement. Researchers consider three types of reliability:

- Test-retest reliability: it measures reliability over time. Does the instrument measure reliability accurately each time it is used?
- Internal reliability: it measures reliability over items. Does the instrument measure reliability accurately across items? If a certain construct rated higher in one participant, it would also rate high on a similar individual who has similar characteristics. Therefore, in order to guarantee internal reliability all the instances of measurement needs to be similar.
- Inter-rater reliability: it measures consistency across different researchers. Does an instrument work similarly regardless of who uses it?

Validity: "Validity is the extent to which the scores from a measure represent the variable they are intended to" (Price et al. 2015). In other words, does the researcher really measure the construct that the researcher intends to measure. Positivists argue that the absence of validity may cause more serious problems in research than the absence of reliability. For instance, when measuring students' comprehension of the course material, if we focus solely on their attendance then this would be an invalid way to assess the students' comprehension level. Students may come to classes regularly, but there may be some that do not bother listening to the lectures. We therefore need to find better criterion to assess student comprehension levels. For instance, we may need to focus on their participation, exam results or oral expressions on the course content.

Operational definition: This is yet another key term in positivist research. Operational definition means that in order to conduct research you need to define all the concepts and variables clearly. This requirement for clarity in definitions is called operational definition. The researchers must agree upon the constructed concepts and their definitions by an unambiguous language of operational definition. In data collection, this refers to a clear and concise detailed definition of a measure, or any variables that are under scrutiny. By adopting this approach a study can be replicated in other contexts by other researchers.

Hypothesis: This is another pivotal concept in positivist methodology. It denotes a statement that researchers formulate when they speculate upon the outcome of a research or an experiment. A hypothesis is a speculative statement in which researchers put forth their expectations or predictions in the form of a proposition. A hypothesis provides the initial point where to start testing claims and conclusions of the research under scrutiny.

Practically speaking, a hypothesis is a proposed causal relationship between dependent and independent variables.

A dependent variable is the variable being tested and measured in a scientific experiment. The independent variable is the variable being controlled and changed to check its relationship with the dependent variable. In other words, the dependent variable is called dependent because it depends on the influence of the independent variable.

Independent variable (IV) is the variable that is controlled. It is the variable that the researcher purposely changes or controls in order to see what effect it has.

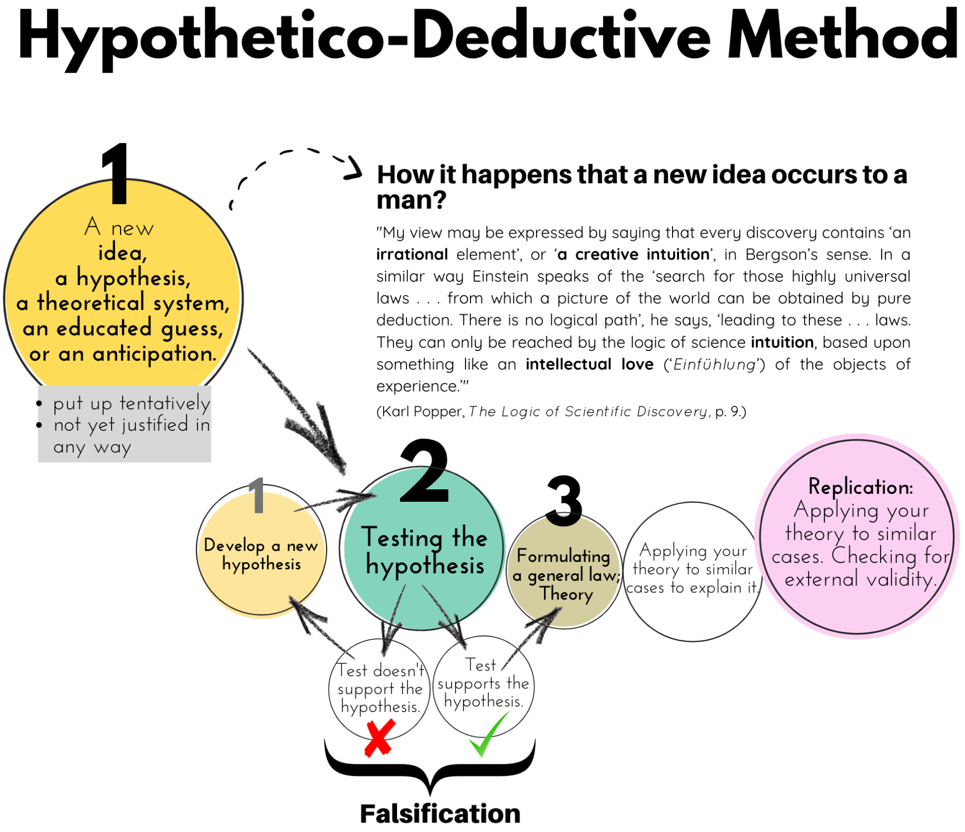
Scientific research should:

Pose significant question questions that can be investigated empirically
Link research to relevant theory
Use methods that permit direct investigation of questions
Provide a coherent, explicit chain of reasoning to rule out counterinterpretations
Replicate and generalize findings accross studies
Disclose research to encourage professional scrutiny and critique

Source: Packer, 2011, 18.

The above table shows the basic steps of scientific research from a positivist perspective. Empirical research aims to explain a social phenomenon by reaching generalizable findings across time and space.

"Hypothesis testing," is one of the basic steps where "hypothetico-deductive" logic is applied in scientific research. By hypothesis testing, the researchers ensure generalizability of their findings. By this logic, researchers are able to prove that the relationship that is shown between variables are significant, which is to say that they are not a result of chance alone and that there is a systematic relationship. The basic idea in this approach is that science proceeds by taking two steps. As we briefly discussed above, hypothesis proposing is the first speculative step; the second is the logical step, and in this second step of testing the hypothesis the researchers use statistical methods. Science builds knowledge by following strict procedures of testing hypotheses and by eliminating all other speculations that are found to be false (Packer 2011: 19).


Hypothetico-Deductive Method
1
A new idea, a hypothesis, a theoretical system, an educated guess, or an anticipation.
put up tentatively
not yet justified in any way
How it happens that a new idea occurs to a man?
1
Develop a new hypothesis
2
Testing the hypothesis
3
Formulating a general law; Theory
Applying your theory to similar cases to explain it
Replication: Applying your theory to similar cases. Checking for external validity.
Test doesn't support the hypothesis.
Test supports the hypothesis.
Falsification

"My view may be expressed by saying that every discovery contains 'an **irrational** element', or '**a creative intuition**', in Bergson's sense. In a similar way Einstein speaks of the 'search for those highly universal laws . . . from which a picture of the world can be obtained by pure deduction. There is no logical path', he says, 'leading to these . . . laws. They can only be reached by the logic of science **intuition**, based upon something like an **intellectual love** ('*Einfühlung*') of the objects of experience.'"

(Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, p. 9.)

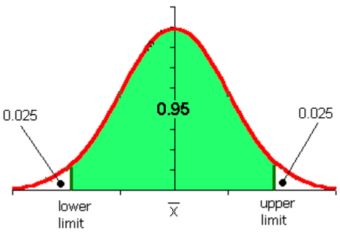
Figure 6.3: Hypothetico-deductive method

Replication is one of the key components of this approach as it ensures external validity. In other words, findings in one context are also applicable in other contexts. Researchers pay attention to follow the exact same procedures of the previous researchers and they are in constant dialogue with one another through scientific journals. In this way, researchers struggle to either affirm or refute each others' findings, and the process results in the accumulation of knowledge among the community of researchers regarding a certain issue area.

5. Steps for Scientific Research in the Positivist Approach

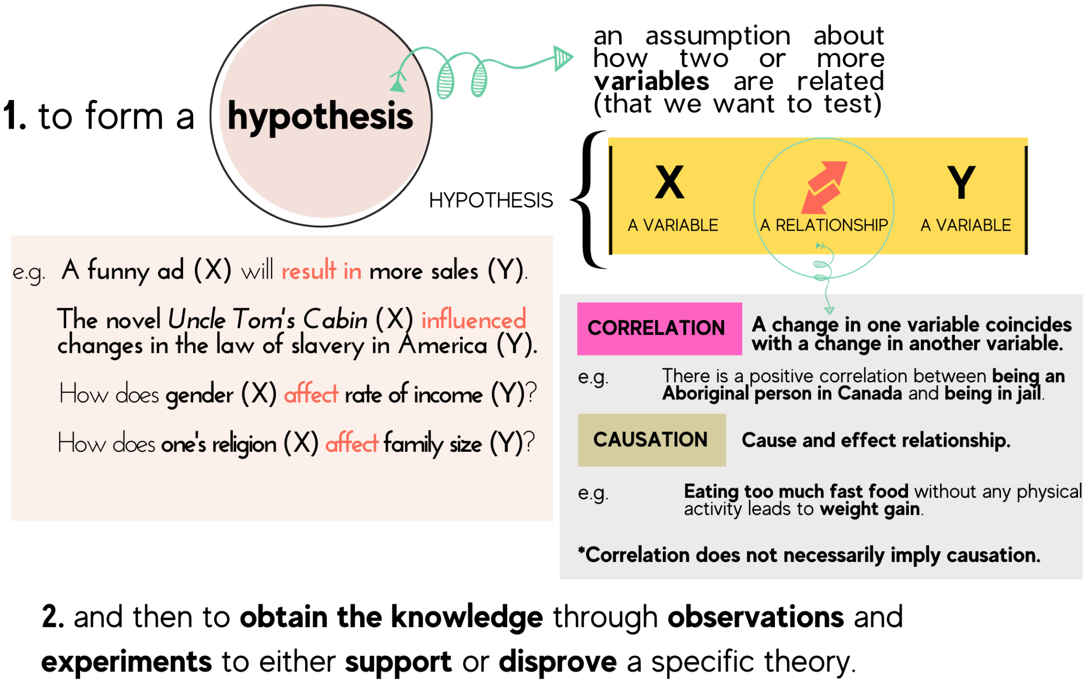
The table below shows the typical stages of a classical experimental research, and from this you will be able to better understand all of the above concepts as well as the basic ontological and epistemological assumptions by following the steps in the context of an experimental study.

Step 1: Formulate a hypothesis H_1: running hypothesis H_0: null hypothesis	H_1 = Significant development: Students who took the Comparative Theories and Methods course for two semesters developed a higher ability of abstract thinking compared to students who did not take the course. (The students achieved a higher mean score on an abstract thinking ability test). H_0 = No development: Students who took the Comparative Theories and Methods course for two semesters did not develop a higher ability of abstract thinking compared to students who did not attend the course (the students did not achieve a higher mean score on an abstract thinking ability test).
Step 2: Random sampling and running the experiment	Sampling: Random Probabilistic Sampling Randomly assign two groups. Those who will take the course (experimental group), and those who will go through similar activities without having attended the course (control group). Some activity is necessary to control the placebo effect. Run the experiment (Pre test – 14 weeks course and post test) Check for Reliability and Validity. Is the test reliable and valid? Discuss what they mean.

Step 3: Analysis	Hypothesis testing – check whether your experimental group's scores are significantly higher than your control groups scores. Anova: comparison of mean scores. Analysis of variance. What does confidence interval mean? Show that in normal distribution that the difference in mean scores between the two groups are not an effect of chance alone but that the difference is indeed significant (meaningful and systematic). 
Step 4: Replication	Run the same experiment in different contexts. Check for external validity.

Experiments are designed for hypothesis testing. They enable the researcher to see how confident they are in rejecting the "null hypothesis" that a treatment makes no difference. The operational definition of variables is an effort the positivists would have applauded to avoid constructs with hidden metaphysical connotations. The mantra that correlation is not causation reflects the Vienna Circle's insistence that causality is a metaphysical notion.

In summary, positivism is built upon five main principles. The first principle of positivism takes sociology to be a science, one that should be different from the natural sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology. It should have a method such as observation. According to positivists, sociology as a science studies only the observable and external subjects. If you are using positivist methodology you cannot accept the existence of anything that is not material. It is because things that have no material substance cannot be observed. From this perspective, science studies only that which is observable. The second principle of positivism is that science is objective, value-free and universal. Because the natural sciences are objective, value-free and universal, according to positivists, disciplines such as sociology, economics and psychology should also be universal. The third principle of positivism is that since metaphysics cannot be empirically proven it therefore does not exist. Hence, in their view metaphysics is outside the domain of scientific research. Fourth, positivists rely heavily on quantitative methods. Since their purpose is to discover the laws of history and society in a way very much similar to the laws of physics which are applicable everywhere in the world, it requires that these laws can be tested everywhere and by everybody and, for this reason, they tend to rely more on quantitative methods such as surveys, interviews and questionnaires.



1. to form a **hypothesis**

an assumption about how two or more **variables** are related (that we want to test)

HYPOTHESIS

e.g. A funny ad (X) will result in more sales (Y).

The novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (X) influenced changes in the law of slavery in America (Y).

How does gender (X) affect rate of income (Y)?

How does one's religion (X) affect family size (Y)?

CORRELATION	**A change in one variable coincides with a change in another variable.**
e.g.	There is a positive correlation between **being an Aboriginal person in Canada** and **being in jail**.
CAUSATION	**Cause and effect relationship.**
e.g.	**Eating too much fast food** without any physical activity leads to **weight gain**.

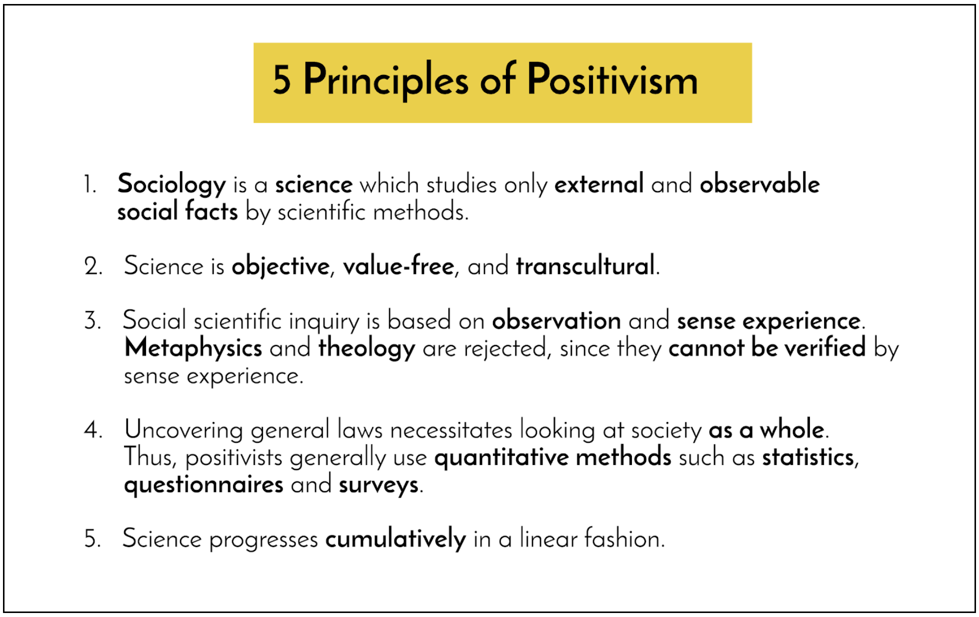
***Correlation does not necessarily imply causation.**

2. and then to **obtain the knowledge** through **observations** and **experiments** to either **support** or **disprove** a specific theory.

Figure 6.4: The scientific method of the positivist methodology

Lastly, from a positivist's point of view, history has a direction and the whole of humanity is moving into this direction. Auguste Comte and Marx believed in a linear development of history. The figure below summarizes these five principles.

All the other approaches we will discuss in the subsequent chapter can be seen as critiques of positivism. Hence, we will be criticising positivism extensively throughout the book. The critique comes not only from those who are outside of positivist circles but also from those within, thus paving the way for the emergence of postpositivism. We will delve into this internal critique in the next chapter.



5 Principles of Positivism

1. **Sociology** is a **science** which studies only **external** and **observable social facts** by scientific methods.
2. Science is **objective**, **value-free**, and **transcultural**.
3. Social scientific inquiry is based on **observation** and **sense experience**. **Metaphysics** and **theology** are rejected, since they **cannot be verified** by sense experience.
4. Uncovering general laws necessitates looking at society **as a whole**. Thus, positivists generally use **quantitative methods** such as **statistics**, **questionnaires** and **surveys**.
5. Science progresses **cumulatively** in a linear fashion.

Figure 6.5: Five basic principles of positivism

The positivist approach provides sound tools that can be put to use in factual data analysis and empirical studies. When we are looking for answers to questions like: what is the percentage of people in Turkey who pray five times a day? Have these percentages increased or decreased over time? Or do the instances of violence against women increase or decrease depending on the level of eduation? These sorts of questions can be answered only through quantitative methods and methodological procedures. Therefore when it comes to studying the subjects that necessitates factual data analysis we are all essentially positivists, and yet we are not reductionists. We believe research questions determine proper methodologies. For instance, when your research aims to understand subjective and situated knowledge of social actors, that is when your focus is predominantly on the meaning of social action, and here you need to take into consideration the "attitudinal" positions of the participants. This is where the positivist approach faces its biggest challenge. How can subjective experience, which is a tangible social reality that deserves scholarly attention, be disregarded as an error and expelled from the scientific study within the social sciences? This issue is related to another problem: how can a scientist "measure" the meaning of behaviors and discourses.

Positivist scholars fall short in answering these sorts of questions, and consequently they may deny a legitimate status for research motivated by these strand of questions. Because they have a monist understanding of social reality, they exclude other sources of knowledge and ways of knowing.

6. Limitations of Positivism

- The focus on hypothesis-testing research ignores the revolutionary aspect of science.
- Clinical trials are one way that research is carried out during times of (some forms of) normal science. To view scientific research only in terms of such activity is:
- To look only at the comfortable side of science.
- To ignore those aspects of science that make revolutions necessary – the strong ontological and epistemological commitments that scientists adopt when they work within an accepted paradigm.
- The gold standard prevents researchers from studying, let alone questioning, the forms of life in which people find themselves and in which things are found.
- People are not, in fact, independently existing entities. We exist together, in shared forms of life.
- Princeton political theorist Sheldon Wolin calls these the "moral paradigms" in which we live.

In the eagerness to build a new natural science of human beings, there has been a tendency to generalize from regularities of a regnant moral paradigm, and to claim we are discovering universal laws that govern human beings. The most serious defect in this endeavour is not simply unwarranted generalizations, but the hidden ideological bases. (Bernstein 1976: 106)

Bernstein anticipates that hypothesis-testing social science will fail to find regular and predictable patterns of behaviour because the people it studies live in a variety of different moral paradigms and these are continually changing. What is necessary is a new methodology, in the sense of a program of inquiry, that replaces the inappropriate metaphysics that underlies empirical-analytic research of the early 21st century which had also underlaid the logical positivism of the early 20th century. The result will not be freedom from metaphysics, but rather a better metaphysics, one that is more adequate to the complexities of human life and human beings.

Key Words

hypothesis:	a statement created by researchers when they speculate upon the outcome of a research or experiment. A hypothesis is a sentence that is comprised of a researcher's formulation and expectations and is meant to serve as an initial starting point when testing assumptions.
hypothetical-deductive process:	the scientific process that starts from observation and proceeds to experimental methods and hypothesis testing.
dependent variable:	a variable that is tested and measured in a scientific experiment.
independent variable:	a variable that is controlled and changed in order to check its relationship with the dependent variable. In other words, the dependent variable is called *dependent* because it depends on the influence of the *independent* variable.

reliability:	refers to the consistency of a measure. It ensures the reliability of the instrument that is being used for measurement.
validity:	the extent to which the scores from a measure represent the variable they are intended to.
operational definition:	this is one of the key terms in positivist research. In order to conduct research we need to define all the concepts and variables clearly. This type of definition is referred to as an operational definition.
empiricism:	a philosophical tradition that sees experience as the basis for knowledge.
rationalism:	a philosophical tradition that bases knowledge on the human capacity for reason.

Summary

- Social reality and natural reality have the same properties and can be explained through observations and experiments.
- Beliefs about the external world are worthy of the description 'knowledge' only if they can be put to the test of experience.
- Experience means sensory observation.
- The positivist approach can be identified by its ontological claim based on a single, identifiable reality.
- The positivist approach aims to achieve a value-free, objectivist-science.
- The gist of this methodology is to achieve interpretation-free observations and logical inferences.
- The positivist paradigm approaches the issue of subjectivity of the researcher as an "error," hence this reductionism becomes its

shortcoming. It falls short to account for crucial aspects of human subjective experience.

- Despite the short coming, the positivist approach provides sound tools for researchers in accounting for factual aspects of social relations.

Dig Deep

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Chapter Seven

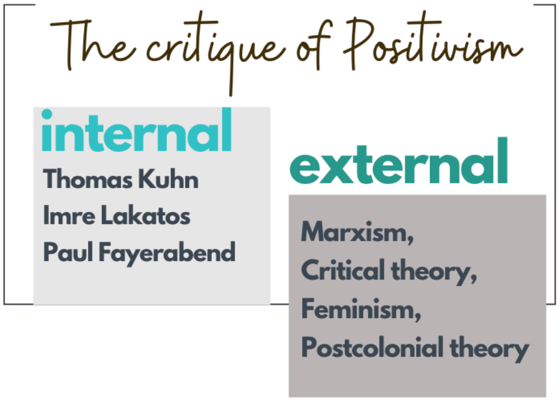
POSTPOSITIVISM: A CRITIQUE FROM WITHIN

Focus Questions

- ◊ What are the basic critiques of positivism from within?
- ◊ Is scientific inquiry as it is proposed by positivists sound and legitimate?
- ◊ According to Kuhn, what are the limitations of normal science? And how can science proceed?
- ◊ Why did Fayerabend question the scientific methodology?

The critique of positivism comes from many different angles, the following chapters, namely, critical approaches or interpretive approaches emerged as a criticism against positivism. However, similar criticisms also come from within. In this chapter, we will consider Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyeraband's radical critique of positivism. The critiques are radical because they question the basic premises of the positivist scientific endeavor. We regard them as internal because they did not propose an alternative and they paved the way towards the formulation of postpositivism. We can regard the critiques of the Marxist school, feminism and post colonial theory or all the different varieties of interpretive approaches as an external critique because each are known to have established their own school of thought as well as their own epistemological, ontological and methodological approaches in addition to having established an alternative approach and separate canon outside of positivism. Postpositivism on the other hand emerged as a radical critique and revision of the basic tenets of the classical positivist paradigm.

As you saw in the previous chapter, positivism originated from the debates that took place during the early Enlightenment period and started to take its shape in the social sciences in the second half of the 19th century with Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim and J.S. Mill. Logical positivism which was developed by the Vienna Circle between the 1920s and 1930s heralded the emergence of positivism as we know it today. Karl Popper's take on positivism gave the science its most recent form, which happens to be widely accepted today. This has been the more dominant approaches in the English-speaking world since the post-war period and has subsequently created its own ideology and worldview. Today this unique worldview is characterised by its obsession with intervention to solve social problems, engineer and control social life in the name of efficiency by way of its monism and reductionist outlook. Eventually, postpositivism emerged as a result of the critiques that were being leveled against positivism. Post means after, so postpositivism means after positivism, and owing to its radical critique of positivism it requires mentioning when discussing the history of scientific thought.



The critiques put forth by postpositivists do not deal with ontology and epistemology but are mostly in consideration of methodology. Such critics are mainly concerned about the shortcomings of the methods formulated by classical positivists, and they have therefore aimed to revise and improve on them. Yet some of them go further and even question the legitimacy of positivism entirely. Despite all of these internal and external criticisms, positivism survives as the most common scientific approach in the world today. Most of the critiques of postpositivists focus on positivist claims about the universalism of science and its continuous linear evolution, as well as its claim for objectivity and value-neutrality. Postpositivists argue that science did not evolve through a linear progress, and that it is moreover not universal but relative. Value neutrality is also either impossible or immoral. Postpositivists mainly try to amend by putting emphasis on relativism and on the biases of researchers, whereas positivists try to achieve objectivity by focusing on empirical and observational methods by analyzing measurable data.

1. From Positivism to Postpositivism

Postpositivism is primarily a critique of previous positivist approaches. While logical positivists claim that science is an objective, value-free and rational activity, the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle were determined to reconstruct science as a process of interpretation-free observations and logical inferences. They wanted to build the foundations for a universal and unified science that would be free from metaphysics. Postpositivism emerged as an objection to this stance.

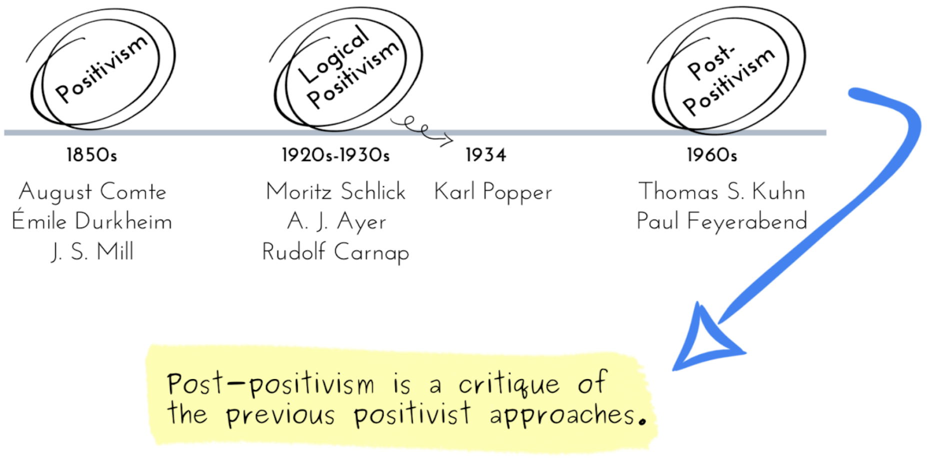

Positivism
Logical Positivism
Post-Positivism
1850s
August Comte
Émile Durkheim
J. S. Mill
1920s-1930s
Moritz Schlick
A. J. Ayer
Rudolf Carnap
1934
Karl Popper
1960s
Thomas S. Kuhn
Paul Feyerabend
Post-positivism is a critique of the previous positivist approaches.

Figure 7.1: Timeline of positivist approaches

According to postpositivists, science is a subjective and value-laden activity that is influenced by the values, world view, culture, and religion of the researcher. To say that science is neither value-free nor objective and that it is influenced by the values and worldview of the researcher means that science is not purely rational and, therefore, according to postpositivists, there are extra-rational forces that influence both the research and the researcher. For postpositivists, science is subjective in the sense that it changes from culture to culture, from religion to religion and from individual to individual considering that each of them possess different cultural, religious, ideological and individual characteristics. They also argue that it is not possible to completely isolate a researcher's scientific activity from their personal backgrounds.

Positivists believe in only one single universal truth, one that is to be accepted by everyone, where research must lead us to this single truth and for which the surest route to find this truth is science. However, postpositivists believe that there is no universal truth and that truth is essentially paradigm relative, culture relative, civilization relative, religion relative, and individual relative. This means that different societies define truth differently. They claim that our scientific research does not represent the ultimate universal truth because the nature of truth is influenced by our culture.

From the positivist perspective, science is an ahistorical process that does not get influenced by history. In contrast, postpositivists argue that science is a historical process that is shaped by historical conditions. From the standpoint of a logical positivist, the data is theory neutral, meaning that there is a distinction between theory and facts, the observer and the observed. In contrast, for postpositivists the data is theory-laden and observations are not theory-free. Positivists contend that science evolves and develops cumulatively in a progressive linear fashion. Postpositivists, however, believe that science does not develop cumulatively in a linear fashion but through a transition from one world view to another in the form of revolutions.

Positivists reject anything that is unobservable and untestable. Consequently, metaphysics and immeasurable phenomena are excluded from the legitimate domain of sciences. Postpositivists, on the other hand, include metaphysics as well as immeasurable facts in their discussions. Among well-known postpositivists we will discuss Thomas S. Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend.

2. Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996): Paradigm Shift

While positivists paid little attention to the history of science, Thomas Khun, a historian of science, had great regard for it. According to him, the positivist conception of science is inaccurate and naïve, for it ignores the dynamism of the history of science.

A "bright new idea" appeared in the form of a radically different re-interpretation of science which was offered by Thomas Kuhn in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). He argued against the notion of progress and evolution in science. He used examples from the history of science to reject the idea that science evolves in time. So, if there is no evolution then how can we explain changes in science? Thomas Khun came up with a new conception of science which he called a paradigm shift. Instead of evolution and progress, he used the term paradigm shift to explain the changes that take place in science. Through his usage of paradigm shift he intended to explain these changes as a scientific revolution rather than as a scientific evolution. During certain periods of time, existing scientific ideas are replaced with new ones by way of scientific revolutions. Before and after every scientific revolution, there is a different paradigm accepted by the scientific community. The Copernican revolution in astronomy replaced Ptolemy, while Newton was replaced by Einstein and the revolution he brought about in physics.

Every science operates within a "paradigm." The successful practice of science requires a kind of tacit knowing that makes possible a particular way of seeing the world. Practices cannot be detached from ontological and epistemological commitments.

"Thus, scientific revolutions are not the replacement of wrong ideas with right ones. Scientific revolutions are "non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or part by an incompatible new one" (Kuhn 1970: 92).

Kuhn drew a distinction between "normal" and "revolutionary" science. According to him, the normal science operates within what he famously called a "paradigm". Paradigm shifts happen in the same manner as revolutions occur. Revolution involves abandonment of an existing ideology or world view, sorting it out and bringing it together in a new way. A science may go through hundreds of such revolutions in its history. Kuhn proposed that the structure of science is one of repeated revolutions. Revolutionary science operate in the form of revolutions by replacing an existing worldview with a new one.

In revolutionary science, a crisis begins to develop when a number of unsolvable problems or "anomalies" arise. Anomalies consistently violate scientists' expectations and consequently attract growing attention. They persist despite the best attempts to make them conform to existing theories or to explain them away as the products of experimental error or poor equipment. Eventually, scientific research enters into some form of crisis. A growing part of the scientific community feels that existing theories and concepts are inadequate and that things have gone badly wrong. The only solution seems to have a new way of working, a change in "the way in which one conceives of the phenomena, a break that may involve junking much former work, not as false but as part of a quickly forgotten example of how not to think". This is why it is referred to as a "revolution." This shift will never occur by defeating another paradigm or proving it wrong, but simply by replacing it through social and psychological processes.

2.1. Scientific Paradigms: Basic Principles

Unlike positivists who completely rule out metaphysics, for Kuhn, metaphysics is central and essential to all scientific activity. Every science operates within a "paradigm": the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, and a worldview that assumes a specific ontological, epistemological, and methodological position. The successful practice of science requires a kind of tacit knowing that makes it possible for a particular way of seeing the world. An important point of Kuhn's argument is that practices cannot be separated from ontological and epistemological commitments. Scientific practices require and embody these types of commitments according to Kuhn.

It is intrinsic to a paradigm that it tells us "about the entities that nature does and does not contain and about the ways in which those entities behave" (Kuhn 1970: 109; cited in Packer 2011: 37).

"Successive paradigms tell us different things about the population of this universe and about this population's behaviour" (Packer 2011: 37).

"The reception of a new paradigm often necessitates a redefinition of the corresponding science" and in doing so it changes "the standard that distinguishes a real scientific solution from a mere metaphysical speculation" (Packer 2011: 37).

Scientific knowledge is more than explicit hypotheses and formal theories. Paradigms provide a form of tacit knowledge that cannot be captured in rules, laws, and formal criteria. This tacit mode of knowing makes possible a way of seeing the world. Kuhn's proposal – that assumptions about the kinds of entities that exist (ontological assumptions) and how we can know them (epistemological assumptions) are in some sense "embedded" in the practices and institutions of a science – was radical. It is a point of fundamental difference from the positivist reconstruction of science, which aimed for the complete elimination of such assumptions.

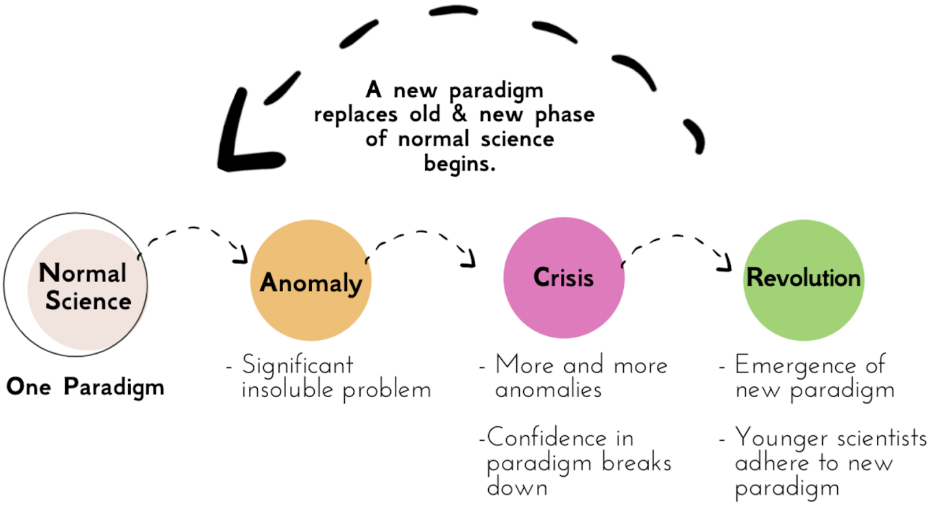

A new paradigm replaces old & new phase of normal science begins.
Normal Science
One Paradigm
Anomaly
- Significant insoluble problem
Crisis
- More and more anomalies
-Confidence in paradigm breaks down
Revolution
- Emergence of new paradigm
- Younger scientists adhere to new paradigm

Figure 7.2: The revolutionary character of paradigm shifts

2.2. Incommensurability Principle

The incommensurability principle states that you cannot compare paradigms to one another and make a judgment on the basis of which one is more in line with the truth. In the same way you cannot claim that one paradigm is right and the other wrong. Each paradigm is accepted by people and is believed to be true according to their beliefs and perceptions. This presents a more sociological perspective from the standpoint of those who consume and receive science. Kuhn's approach is more historical and sociological rather than purely theoretical.

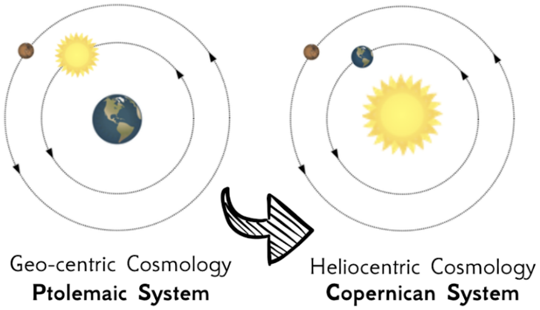
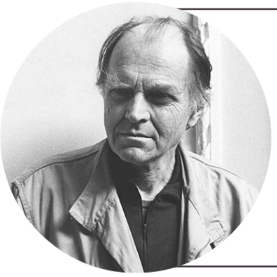


Figure 7.3: Copernican revolution in astronomy replacing Ptolemaic system as an example of a scientific revolution

2.3. Paul Fayerabend (1924-1994): Against Method

Paul Feyerabend is the author of the famous book *Against Method*, which alludes to his stance against the positivist method. He argues that there is no universal scientific method that governs our scientific research. Since, according to him, there are no useful and exceptionless methodological rules governing the progress of science or the growth of knowledge, we cannot justify science as the best way of acquiring knowledge. There may be other ways of acquiring knowledge apart from the scientific method. The history of science



> *There are no fixed methodological rules governing the progress of science or the growth of knowledge. Logical empiricist methodologies and Popper's Critical Rationalism would inhibit scientific progress.*

is so complex that if we insist on a general methodology so as to not inhibit progress, then the only "rule" it will contain will be the useless suggestion that "anything goes."

In particular, logical empiricist methodologies and Popper's critical rationalism would inhibit scientific progress by enforcing restrictive conditions on new theories. He said:

> "Because there is no scientific method, we cannot justify science as the best way of acquiring knowledge. And the results of science don't prove its excellence, since these results have often depended on the presence of non-scientific elements, science prevails only because "the show has been rigged in its favour" (SFS, p. 102), and other traditions, despite their achievements, have never been given a chance. The truth, he suggests, is that "science is much closer to myth than a scientific philosophy is prepared to admit. It is one of the many forms of thought that have been developed by man, and not necessarily the best. It is conspicuous, noisy, and impudent, but it is inherently superior only for those who have already decided in favour of a certain ideology, or who have accepted it without ever having examined its advantages and its limits (AM, p. 295).
>
> The separation of church and state should therefore be supplemented by the separation of science and state, in order for us to achieve the humanity we are capable of. Setting up the ideal of a free society as "a society in which all traditions have equal rights and equal access to the centres of power" (SFS, p. 9). (https://stanford.library.sydney.edu.au/archives/spr2009/entries/feyerabend/)

If you compare Popper, Kuhn, and Feyerabend, you will see that while Popper upholds the cumulative conception of science, Kuhn and Feyerabend defend the non-cumulative conception of science. According to Popper, "Each theory builds progressively on proceeding theories". While according to Feyerabend:

> “Science is essentially an anarchic enterprise: theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives.”
> — Paul Karl Feyerabend, Against Method

“The idea of a method that contains firm, unchanging, and absolutely binding principles for conducting the business of science meet considerable difficulty when confronted with the results of historical research. We find, then, that there is not a single rule, however plausible, and however firmly grounded in epistemology, that is not violated at some time or other. It becomes evident that such violations are not accidental events, they are not the results of insufficient knowledge or of inattention which might have been avoided. On the contrary, we see that they are necessary for progress. Indeed, one of the most striking features of recent discussions in the history and philosophy of science is the realization that events and developments, such as the invention of atomism in antiquity, the Copernican Revolution, the rise of modern atomism (kinetic theory; dispersion theory; stereochemistry; quantum theory), the gradual emergence of the wave theory of light, occurred only because some thinkers either decided not to be bound be certain 'obvious' methodological rules, or because they unwittingly broke them” (Feyerabend 1993: 23).

Key Words

scientific and methodological anarchism: “Against the belief in only one system or a “rational” standard of justification, Paul Feyerabend defends methodological anarchism, which holds that there are alternative systems within which coherence can still be established. Feyerabend, in his objection and rejection of universal standard on method, holds that there are many systems

	and (even within science itself), each with its own standards of justification and as such, it is not possible to choose between them "rationally", for they are incommensurable. So, in the place of the "rationality" of universal scientific and technological method, he talks of methodological plurality, or what he terms "Epistemological (Scientific) Anarchism" (Anowai & Okafor 2018: 506).
incommensurability:	if two things are incommensurable, it means the two things cannot be be judged by the same standards; it arises when we cannot devise a common standard of measurement.

Summary

- Post means *after*, so postpositivism means after positivism, and owing to its radical critique of positivism it requires mentioning when discussing the history of scientific thought.
- For Thomas Kuhn, there is no universal science. In certain periods of time, existing scientific ideas are replaced with new ones by scientific revolutions. Before and after every scientific revolution, there is a different paradigm accepted by scientific community. Each paradigm has its own 'normal science'. The relationship between different paradigms is incommensurable.
- For Fayerabend, there are no universal methodological rules governing the progress of science.

Dig Deep

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MODULE 4

MODULE
4

CHAPTER 8
Marxism and Feminism

CHAPTER 9
Postcolonial Theory

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you will be able to:

- grasp the difference between “social apparent phenomena” and “real mechanisms of the society”.
- understand the debate between “laboratory stand” and “*praxis*” in research activity.
- arrive at a better understanding regarding the difference between a neutral or an objective stand and a normative or a political stand in the social sciences.
- discuss the “standpoint” theory derived from the experiences of the people under study.
- critically analyze the claim that unlike biological sex and anatomy, gender and race are social constructions.
- realize that all critical studies have a moral and political stance.
- see why “facts” cannot be separated from “values”.learn the limitations and critiques of critical theories.

Chapter Eight

MARXISM AND FEMINISM

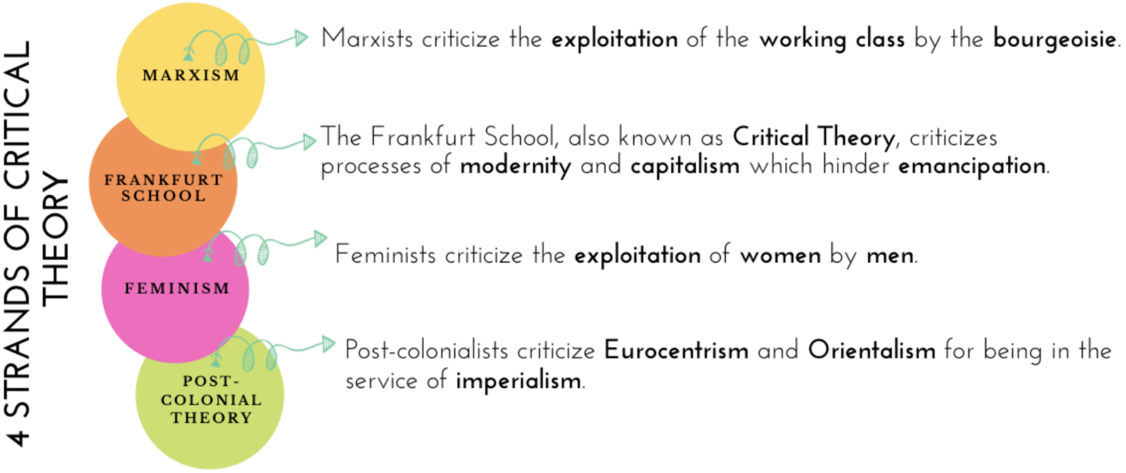
Focus Questions

- ◊ What are critical theories? Why are they called critical?
- ◊ What are some of the points that they disagree on with positivism?
- ◊ What are the purposes of critical theories?
- ◊ How do production relations, imperialism, and patriarchy influence the way we interpret events that take place around us?
- ◊ What are the main assumptions of feminism and how does it approach to reality, knowledge, and methods?
- ◊ What are the main criticisms of feminisst approach against positivism?

You can consider the theories discussed in this module as responses to positivism. Critical approaches include Marxism, the Frankfurt School (Critical Theory), feminism and postcolonial theory. They all reject the assumptions of positivism. They all draw upon Marxist perspectives regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Contrary to the contention of positivist paradigms, which view reality as singular and identifiable and that it can be measured and studied objectively, critical theory assumes that reality is historically constructed. Historically constituted social structures determine the way we see the world and this determination is not immune to power relations and interests. Harding argues that in order to achieve a “strong objectivity” researchers do not need to become one with the people they are analysing. Instead we need to think carefully about the location of a particular culture from a critical distance (Harding 1991). Critical theorists "justify their claims of producing less distorted, and preferable accounts of social reality through recourse to Hegelian, and subsequently Marxian, theorization that material life sets limits on human understanding. Because of this, one cannot simply claim to know the truth of experience. Knowledge emerges only through the struggles that the oppressed wage against their oppressors" (Harding 1989; cited in Hughes 2002: 160).

Critical social theories are a group of distinctive approaches that **criticize** the **instrumentalization** of social sciences.



Marxists criticize the **exploitation** of the **working class** by the **bourgeoisie**.

The Frankfurt School, also known as **Critical Theory**, criticizes processes of **modernity** and **capitalism** which hinder **emancipation**.

Feminists criticize the **exploitation** of **women** by **men**.

Post-colonialists criticize **Eurocentrism** and **Orientalism** for being in the service of **imperialism**.

Figure 8.1: Four strands of critical theory

For critical theory, reality is a virtual reality that is "shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values" (Lincoln et al 2011: 100). There is an inherent suspicion about reality which is often translated in the belief that there is "real" reality beyond the immediate one we experience. To illustrate, as the most prominent figures of critical theory, Marxists claim that class relations and inherent domination distort our understanding of history and reality. A clear vision can be achieved only if we grasp the class struggle and look into the social reality through the lenses of domination. Similarly, some factions in feminism (e.g. Hekman 1997) believe it is patriarchy that conceals "real" reality, while postcolonialists such as Anibal Quijano (1928-2018) consider "race and racism [as] the organizing principle that structures all of the multiple hierarchies of the world-system" (Ramón Grosfoguel 2006: 172).

Section A.

MARXISM AND CRITICAL THEORY

1. Marxism and the Materialist Outlook on Society

The Marxist materialist approach is based on the assumption that the economic structures of a particular society generate its cultural features such as ideas, art and institutions. For instance, Marxist thinkers argue that the rise of the modern capitalist economy triggered the emergence of the Enlightenment philosophy movement. In the same way, the rise of the industrial economy must lead to proletarian theories of revolution and the abrogation of property. The economic structures determine the way we look at and think about the world. Put differently, behind our ideas there is a specific economic order.

Here are three major Marxist theories: dialectical materialism, historical materialism and false consciousness.

2. Dialectical Materialism

It refers to the tension between the realm of material economic structures and the realm of ideas. For Marx, economic structures ("base") determine all other elements of social life ("superstructure"). The ideas and beliefs that people have in a class society reflect social institutions that are themselves the result of economic structures. In other words, the material economic domination of a particular social group ("class") upon others constitutes the cornerstone of the whole social fabric.

Therefore, social scientists must analyse this domination in priority in order to understand the society. They should derive their reflections on social and cultural facts from an understanding of this material domination.

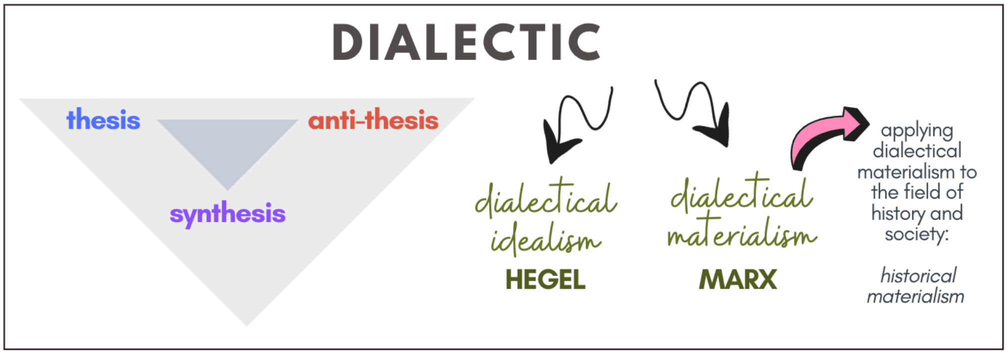

DIALECTIC
thesis
anti-thesis
synthesis
dialectical idealism
HEGEL
dialectical materialism
MARX
applying dialectical materialism to the field of history and society:
historical materialism

Figure 8.2: What is dialectic?

3. Historical Materialism

It refers to the tensions between the dominant and the subordinate economic classes in history. Marx rejects two main accounts of history. Firstly, he rejects the idea that history is composed of a rational process that reason unfolds. Secondly, he does not believe that history is moving towards perfection as time passes. For Marx, the empirical fact is that history is determined by production relations (class relations) and the development of the modes of production. He considers the confrontation between the dominant and subordinate classes as the engine of historical change.

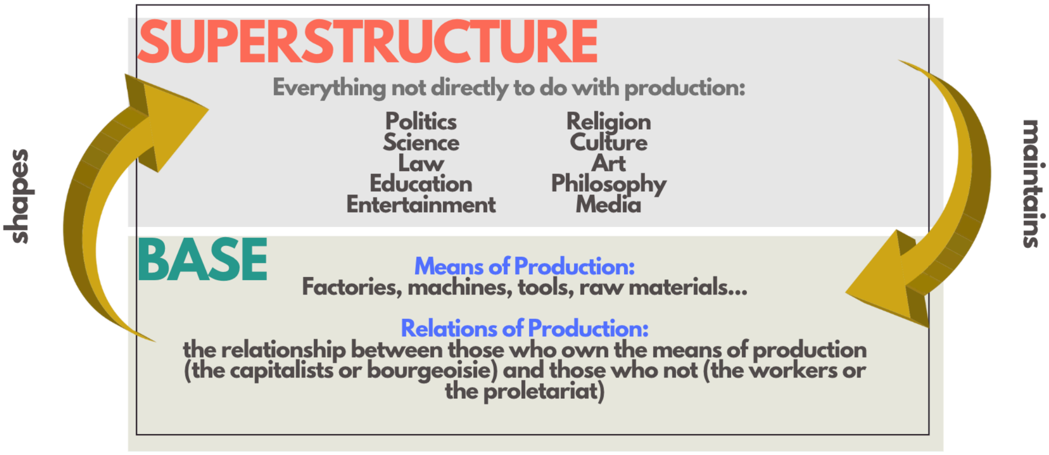

SUPERSTRUCTURE
Everything not directly to do with production:
Politics
Science
Law
Education
Entertainment
Religion
Culture
Art
Philosophy
Media
BASE
Means of Production:
Factories, machines, tools, raw materials...
Relations of Production:
the relationship between those who own the means of production (the capitalists or bourgeoisie) and those who not (the workers or the proletariat)
shapes
maintains

Figure 8.3: Two parts of society according to Marx

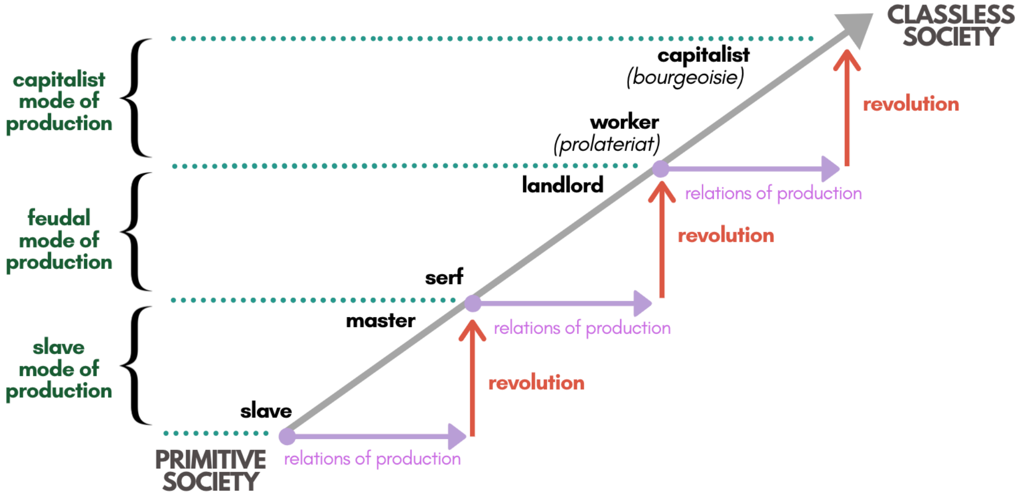

CLASSLESS SOCIETY
capitalist mode of production
capitalist
(bourgeoisie)
revolution
worker
(prolateriat)
feudal mode of production
landlord
relations of production
revolution
serf
slave mode of production
master
relations of production
revolution
slave
PRIMITIVE SOCIETY
relations of production

Figure 8.4: Marx's theory of historical materialism and stages of history

4. False Consciousness

History is shaped by class conflict. But hegemonic ideas conceal this fact. In the hands of the dominant classes, "men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a camera obscura." In Marx's own words:

> "The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. – real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a camera obscura,

> this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process" (Marx & Engels, German Ideology, 1846: 42).

In summary, Marxist thinkers consider dialectical and historical materialism as the theory that discloses the true reality behind social relations. It is this reality that the positivistic sciences of the bourgeoisie tend to hide.

5. The Impact of Dialectical Materialism on Research Activity

Dialectical and historical materialism –as the fundamental outlook to analyze society– grasps ontological, epistemological and methodological meanings. All of these meanings lead social scientists to adopt a certain approach when carrying out their research.

Marxist Ontology: All social phenomena, whether material or immaterial, concrete or abstract, is the consequence of modes of production and economic interactions between dominant and subordinate classes in a society (materialist–monism).

Marxist Epistemology: Social scientists analyze objects that exist in the external world independently from the human mind. Yet, social scientists must not consider social realities – such as law, language or institutions – as neutral, universal and monolithic but, on the contrary, must include them as part of a broader understanding of dialectical relations between the superstructure and the base.

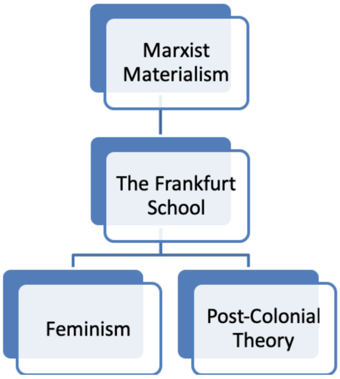
Marxist Methodology: Social scientists use Marxist praxis which conceives social scientists not only as "neutral observers" but as "agents of change." In other words, social scientists must adopt the standpoint of lower classes (proletariat) in order to interpret the world from this side of the dialectical materialism. While the first generation of Marxist thinkers claimed to be the spokesperson ("avant-garde") of the proletariat and to awaken the lower classes from false consciousness (top-down research), the second generation tends to make research within the proletariat (bottom-up research). For the latters, social scientists must experience the conditions of the labor class in order to understand the alienating nature of capitalism and to produce theories that aim to overcome it. As Karl Marx asserts, "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, 1845). In light of Marx's assertion, social science is not value-free and it cannot be performed as armchair theorizing, but rather it is inherently connected to political action and the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.

You should be aware that there are diverse – even opposite – interpretations of Marx. There are many ways in which his works are understood, and this consequently has led to the rise of several Marxist schools of thought. For instance, later Marxists such as Gramsci, Althusser, Laclau, Wallerstein have interpreted Marx rather differently while some were even contradictory.

> *"The essence of the method of historical materialism is inseparable from the 'practical and critical' activity of the proletariat: both are aspects of the same process of social evolution. So, too, the knowledge of reality provided by the dialectical method is likewise inseparable from the class standpoint of the proletariat." (Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, 1971: 20-21)*

6. The Influence of Marxism on Later Critical Theories

Marxism is regarded as a critical theory because it produces a very strong critique of the dominant ways of knowing reality as well as of the dominant social institutions. It criticizes certain aspects of positivism and also the current dominant social order such as capitalism, and identifies problems within existing institutions. Moreover, it contradicts the positivist claim of scientific neutrality and argues that any social study that does not take dialectical materialism into its account is reflecting, in essence, the dominant position of the capitalist bourgeoisie.



Dialectical and Historical Materialism have paved the way to further critical approaches in social studies including the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School and various forms of feminism and postcolonial theory. All of them share Marxist key assumptions on the foremost importance of dialectics between dominant and subordinate classes and on the practical way social scientists should conduct their study. Feminism discusses how asymmetrical relations between men and women shape the whole of society and privilege the former against the latter. Postcolonial theory discloses the way that Western imperialism imposes a set of material, cultural and moral rules upon non-Western societies, participating in building a world that serves the interests of Western countries. As for the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt school, it attempts to deconstruct the structural causes inherent to the capitalistic system which prevents human beings from enjoying real emancipation.

7. Narrow and Broad Definitions of Critical Theory

Narrow definition: the Critical Theory (with C and T in capital letters) refers to a specific school of thought initiated by the Institute of Social Research (ISF) at the University of Frankfurt in the late 1920s. In reaction to the rise of fascist societies in the 1920s and 30s, members of the Frankfurt School such as Adorno (1903-1969), Horkheimer (1895-1973) and W. Benjamin (1892-1940) focused their research on the conditions for "real democracy" that would emancipate societies from any kind of chains whether material (labor oppression in factories, inequalities linked to property and the like) or immaterial (inequality of access to education and culture, aesthetics, politics and the like). They conclude that liberal bourgeois society contains in itself the germs of fascism and the extreme level of oppression because capitalist social order distorts the nature of liberty and keeps people in chains in ways that they cannot be aware of it. Capitalism also distorts rationality and free will by presenting self interest of classes and individuals as universal rationality.

> *"The [critical] theory never aims simply at an increase of knowledge as such. Its goal is man's emancipation from slavery. In this it resembles Greek philosophy, not so much in the Hellenistic age of resignation as in the golden age of Plato and Aristotle. After the fruitless political projects of both these men the Stoics and Epicureans confined themselves to developing a doctrine of individualistic practices. The new dialectical philosophy, however, has held on to the realization that the free development of individuals depends on the rational constitution of society. In radically analyzing present social conditions it became a critique of the economy."(Horkheimer, Critical Theory, Selected Essays, 1972: 246)*

Broad definition: a broad definition of critical theory would include Feminism, Postcolonial theory, critical ecology, and so forth. You will find more information about Feminism and Postcolonial theory in the coming sections.

8. Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School

Social scientists of the Frankfurt School often define their theory as normative, explanatory and practical.

Normative: Critical Theory's moral goal is to emancipate human beings from their chains of alienation and – from the redefinition of rationality – to provide human beings with real and total agency over themselves and his environment. In sum, Critical Theory explores the conditions for the achievement of "real democracy" against "reified democracy."

Real Democracy *versus* **Reified Democracy**

Real democracy is a regime that guarantees the possibility for individuals to self-determine their destiny and to design their own ideals and moral principles from rational thinking (positive liberty). On the contrary, reified democracy refers to a regime that only guarantees negative liberty, that is the absence of apparent obstacles and constraints external to the individuals. In such a democracy, citizens are equal before the law but not in practice. Likewise, individuals' freedom is limited by social structures such as in a modern administrative state, mass consumption and industrial modes of production.

Explanatory: Like Marxist theory, Critical Theory pretends to disclose the reality that lies behind apparent social relations in bourgeois liberal societies. In fact, critical scholars discuss the causes of the liberal failure to implement democratic ideals.

Practical: there is a permanent tension between practical or empirical and normative or ideal aspects in the Frankfurt School's methodology. On the one hand, it supports a normative stance as found in philosophical traditions by making the social sciences a tool for the emancipation of individuals. On the other, it promotes empirical social research. As a result, members of the

Frankfurt School stand both outside the society (by defining normative meta-theories) and within it (by applying grassroots methods of research.)

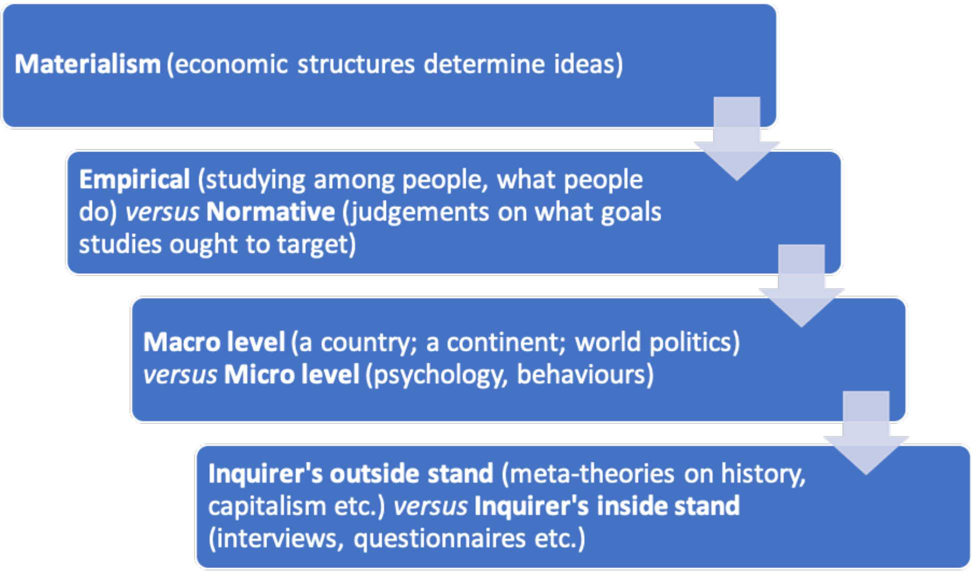

Materialism (economic structures determine ideas)
Empirical (studying among people, what people do) *versus* **Normative** (judgements on what goals studies ought to target)
Macro level (a country; a continent; world politics) *versus* **Micro level** (psychology, behaviours)
Inquirer's outside stand (meta-theories on history, capitalism etc.) *versus* **Inquirer's inside stand** (interviews, questionnaires etc.)

Figure 8.4: Ambivalences of the Frankfurt School's methodology

9. Criticism of the Enlightenment and Positivism by the Frankfurt School

Criticism of the Enlightenment: Thinkers of the Frankfurt school share the ideals of the Enlightenment with regards to rationality, freedom and justice. In "What is Enlightenment?," Kant (1724-1804) defines the Enlightenment as "free-thinking," permitting individuals to reach universal philosophical and political principles by themselves. Through an unrestricted use of reason, individuals are able to establish a new social order based on justice, freedom, fraternity and knowledge.

However, in Dialectics of the Enlightenment (1944), Adorno and Horkheimer of the Frankfurt school criticize the way the Enlightenment's ideals are applied in the liberal-industrial-capitalist society in which the proletariat is exploited:

First of all, dialectical conflict between the bourgeois class and the proletarian class distorts the Enlightenment's ideals: "individual freedom" stated by the law is restricted in practice by alienating economic relations. In other words, common people do not enjoy real freedom due to their economical dominated position in society. Therefore, all individuals in a liberal democracy are equal before the law but not in practice. Yet, according to thinkers of the Frankfurt School, the latter principle ought to be the criteria for evaluating the state of democracies.

As a result, they criticize the liberal conception of negative liberties as "abstract, detached, and ahistorical" since it does not take dialectical social conflicts into account. According to the Frankfurt School, human beings will acquire real freedom only once the whole of society and the entire cultural fabric guarantee freedom in practice for all.

> Enlightenment is mankind's exit from its self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to make use of one's own understanding without the guidance of another. Self-incurred is this inability if its cause lies not in the lack of understanding but rather in the lack of the resolution and the courage to use it without the guidance of another. *Sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your own understanding! is thus the motto of enlightenment.
>
> (Kant, *An answer to the question: what is Enlightenment*, 1784: 1 as quoted in Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-century Answers and Twentieth-century Questions*, 1996: 58)

Moreover, in the bourgeois liberal capitalistic society, rationality does not pave the way for "free thinking" and "emancipation of the human being" – as aspired by the 18th century Enlightenment thinkers – but to mere "self-interests," deprived from any higher attributes of rationality, universality and justice. Members of the Frankfurt School claim that the bourgeois liberal social order presents the principle of "being rational" as "preserving one's own self-interests" instead of "ascending to higher levels of values and truths." As a result, they argue that the bourgeois liberal society leads individuals to exploit each other. This exploitation is not only expressed in labor oppression (Marxist school) but also in mass consumerism, mass culture, hate of the "Other," adherence to fascist ideology, and so forth. In response to this distortion of rationality, thinkers of the Frankfurt School look for sources of empathy and peaceful intersubjective relations between individuals in religious traditions (Horkheimer) and art (Adorno).

Criticism of Positivism: Following the Marxist tradition, the Frankfurt School considers sciences as constructed by human beings in a particular time and space. Sciences reflect the material domination of one group over others.

Therefore, social scientists must critically disclose power relations in the society that lie behind any apparent social phenomenon by using dialectical materialism. Otherwise, they will produce social theories that are merely repeating bourgeois discourse and ideology and thus aiding in regenerating the existing order of exploitation.

10. Second Generation of the Frankfurt School: Jürgen Habermas

In his reflections on communicative action and deliberative democracy, Jürgen Habermas leaves aside the holistic criticism of "reified" democracy and focuses on the concrete ways individuals can actually acquire "rooms of liberty" in the bourgeois liberal society. While the first generation of the Frankfurt School found themselves unable to change the society, which was mostly due to the lack of institutional possibilities, Habermas attempts to design procedures that permit individuals to acquire liberty through public spheres (*Öffentlichkeit*) such as the parliament, justice court, and media.

Habermas searches for ways to institutionalize liberty through our communicative potentials. He voices his position in a non-foundationalist manner. For Habermas, modern society emancipates when we can unleash our communicative potential and as we achieve the ideal speech situation. Put differently, according to Habermas, critical rationality is potentially achieved through deliberative democracy.

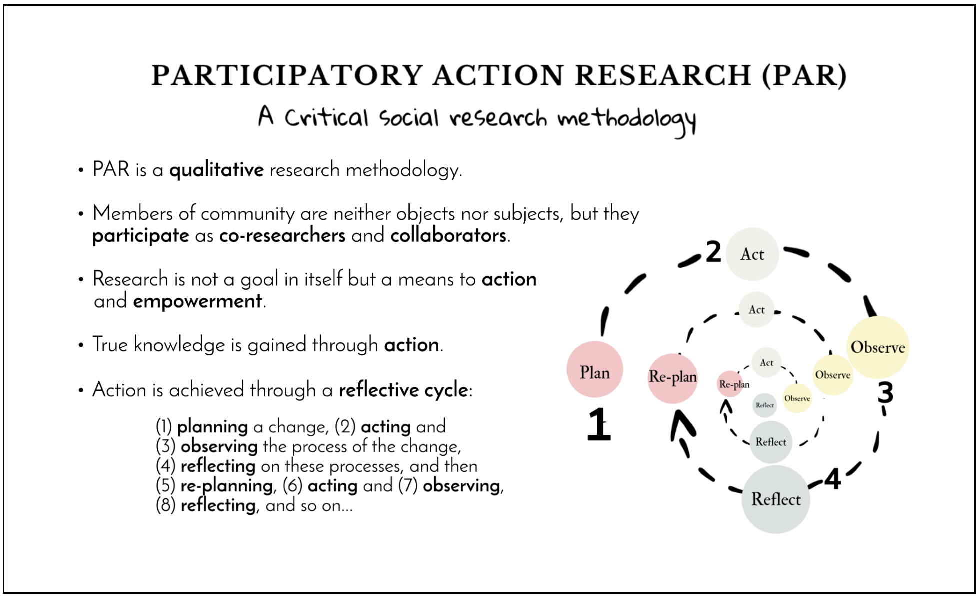
Communicative Action

Citizens use language as the medium to elucidate practical and normative public issues (ex: should we choose solution X or Y?). Based on rationality, "language no longer serves merely to *transmit* and *actualize* prelinguistically guaranteed agreements, but more and more to bring about rationally motivated agreements as well" (Habermas, 1985: 107). Habermas conceive communicative action as the ideal procedure to reach consensus in the public sphere. (Habermas, *The theory of communicative action*, 1985: 107)

As a result, the German philosopher emphasizes procedure over content, the former determining the latter. He argues communication free from domination may naturally lead to policies that emancipate individuals. Even if Habermas's theory still shows normative features (i.e. the role of emancipation and rationality), its focus on procedural mechanisms orientates social research towards practical and empirical analyses that are ideologically less loaded. Habermas gives priority to the process of social phenomena rather than their meanings. This is reflected in his theory about deliberative democracy and communicative action. Another contribution of Habermas comes from his focus on discourse which may be considered as part of the recent linguistic turn in the social sciences and humanities.

Deliberative Democracy

> "The more that deliberation and reflection and a critical spirit play a considerable part in the course of public affairs, the more democratic the nation. It is the less democratic when lack of consciousness, uncharted customs, the obscure sentiments and prejudices that evade investigation, predominate."
>
> (Durkheim, *Division of Labor in Society*, 1893: 89 as quoted in Habermas, *The theory of communicative action*, 1985: 81-82)



PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

A Critical social research methodology

- PAR is a **qualitative** research methodology.
- Members of community are neither objects nor subjects, but they **participate** as **co-researchers** and **collaborators**.
- Research is not a goal in itself but a means to **action** and **empowerment**.
- True knowledge is gained through **action**.
- Action is achieved through a **reflective cycle**:

  (1) **planning** a change, (2) **acting** and
  (3) **observing** the process of the change,
  (4) **reflecting** on these processes, and then
  (5) **re-planning**, (6) **acting** and (7) **observing**,
  (8) **reflecting**, and so on...

Figure 8.5: Participatory action research as a critical social research methodology

Section B.
FEMINISM

One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.
(Simone de Beavoir, Second Sex, 1949, p 330)

Feminism is a critical social theory which criticizes, evaluates and aims to transform gender inequality. In this section, our primary aim is to understand feminist ontology, epistemology and methodology. It should be borne in mind that the methods in this approach are closely related with the movement. Feminist theory has developed as a product of critical social theory and activism. It is a social movement based on methodological tools and a particular approach to social theory which emerge from critical engagement with the social order. Therefore, this book includes feminism as part of critical theory but with the restriction of the emphasis on methodological issues.

In the previous section, you learned Marxism as a critical theory because its main claim is that dominant class of the society uses knowledge as a tool for the exploitation of subordinate class. In this critical approach, the truths are constructed by certain mechanisms in society and represented as ultimate reality. In this thought, knowledge is an illusionary social construction which does not represent the objective reality, and it reflects the interests of the people who produced that type of knowledge. Marxist conflict theory claims that there are two social classes in the world: the workers and owners of the capital, the capitalists or the bourgeoisie and those capitalists exploit the workers. Although feminist approach shares a similar understanding of ontology with Marxists, they explore that the Marxist class based criticism of the economic order is limited and fails to illuminate other conflictual relations and exploitation mechanisms in society. Thus, they refer to the conflict between man and woman which has penetrated into all economic, political and cultural units of society through patriarchal knowledge production and prioritize the experiences of women and men as the most important epistemological basis in their research and develop their methodology with this outlook.

Feminist theories arose out of the fact that feminism as a historical and social movement was intended to challenge patriarchy and its truth claims. There generally has been an assumption that most people have been socialized into sexist ideology and often into particular gender roles and ways of thinking that usually give males more institutional, social and economic power and access to resources. Feminism assumes that the problem in gender relations is not men, but masculinity, sexism and the forces of patriarchy that lead to sexism and gendered knowledge production.

1. Social Construction: Gender and Experience

> "…the experience is central to feminist political, critical and textual practices through, for example, consciousness raising, critiquing scientific discourses and methodologies and imagining new forms of social organization." (Hughes, p.151)

By underlining the importance of the experience of women, feminist theory develops an epistemological approach upon the roles of women and men in social structures. In this approach, the knowledge attributed to roles of women are produced within social structures and power relations. Patriarchy has been described as one of the main ideological systems within the structure which creates the given roles and positions in which women are described as oppressed, subordinated and the men as the dominant and hegemonic group in society. Feminist discussions on patriarchy also vary in order to understand different mechanism of hegemonic gender roles in society. There are different studies showing that the epistemological premises of patriarchy are not necessarily reproduced by men but also by women in society with different coping mechanisms like "bargaining with patriarchy" (Kandiyoti, 1988). The experiences and the practiced roles of women also have been analyzed as a part of knowledge production in which certain roles and sexes are coded dominant and superior. Based on these premises, feminism searches to question sexism and sexist ways of thinking and living that bound both women and men by privileging one sex onto the other (Tisdell, 2008).

The issue of sexism is related to the debates on the distinction between the biological sex and socially constructed roles. By the 1970's, the conceptual debates on the biologically and socially determining factors of being a man or woman in feminist theory shows the limitation of the word “sex”. It leads to a new conceptualization which tries to cover all varying social roles of women and men in society. Gender as a word has been used initially in 1950s but stressed as a productive analytical category only after the end of 1970s (Scott, 1986, p. 1066) The scholars who works on sex and the gender relations and role drew on structural and standpoint feminist theories in that their concern is also social structures. Within the structuralist and poststructuralist discussion, Michel Foucault (1976) investigates a unique perspective about the role of institutionalization and emergences of scientific approaches on the knowledge production about sexuality. He points out how the practices and the discourses created about the body of man and woman are socially constructed and determined within micro level power relations. Based on Foucault’s approach Judith Butler (1990) theorizes gender upon a critical engagement with feminism and argues that the norms about the gender roles are produced and constructed by the performances in daily life. By developing on Beauvoir’s social construction approach which is not necessarily conceptualized gender, Butler shows that gender is a performative.

Gender is one of the key concepts in understanding the feminist approach. There are two key terms, one is sex and the other one is gender; sex is biological. People are born with sexes; man and woman. But gender is socially constructed. Basically it is how womanhood or manhood is understood, defined and what kinds of roles are assigned to them such as appropriate attitude for both men and women to do. So these are defined by society and culture. These are not natural, but they are usually presented as natural reality. Feminists claim to show that this is an illusion, this is not real. The reality is not what is defined by men, system or social structure, reality should be defined by women based on their experience in society. As it is the main focus of structural and standpoint feminists, the social structures in relation to the individuals who practice within the structures and contribute to the production of knowledge and truth regimes are the place for the construction of gender. In this view, truths on gender roles cannot be known with certainty. It is shaped by cultural factors, thus, there are multiple truths. These truths are always both constructed and viewed through one's positionality based on gender, race, class, culture, ethnicity and religion.

2. Feminist Theory: Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology

As it is explicitly demonstrated in the previous chapters of this book, ontology, epistemology and methodology are the most important components in the process of building a theoretical approach. This process is not only crucial to understand how varying approaches to epistemological understanding and methodological applications can emerge from similar ontological views but also demonstrate the different branches, discussions and limitations within a theoretical position. Therefore, we should not totalize feminist theory as a monolithic discourse, because there is a great diversity with many currents within it as it is the case for all major theoretical schools discussed in this book.

2.1. Feminist Ontology

Feminists have interacted with a range of existing ontological positions. However, most of them share the insights of critical theory. Hence, ontologically speaking most would accept most of the premises of ontological positions of critical theorists. The ontological position of critical theorists is that reality is constructed by social, political, economic, cultural, gender values, and power relations. Additionally, feminism especially problematizes the represented realities and norms about the nature and roles of women. If we simply put ontology as referring to one's understanding of the world, according to them the social world is historically constructed, context-bound, relational and situated. Within this intersubjective ontology, which points to the subjective experiences as an important part of the existing reality construction, they suggest that most of the gendered attributes are not given, fixed or constituting the ultimate reality.

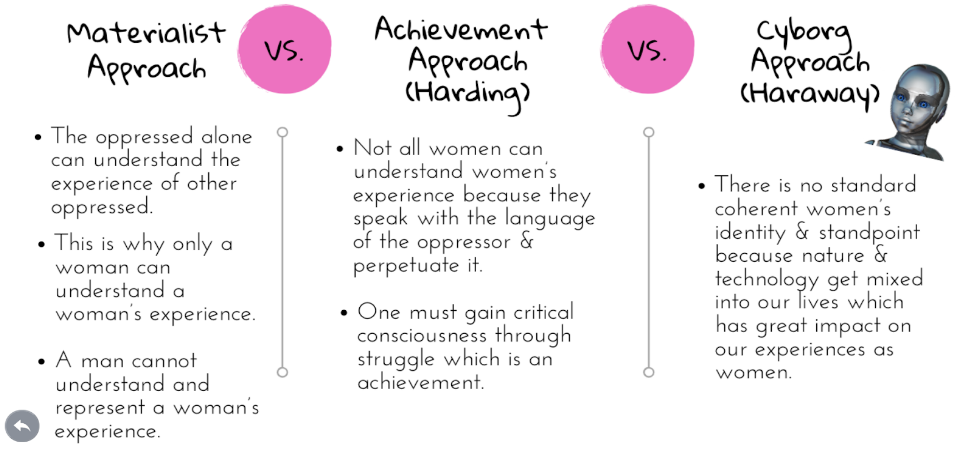
2.2. Feminist Epistemology

All feminist analyses of experience have a moral and political stance. 'Values' and 'power' are organizing concepts in any analysis of experience. In this understanding, facts cannot be separated from values. In this sense, feminists deeply criticizes the objective and value free knowledge claims of positivism. According to feminists, knowledge is embedded in values, conditioned, contextualized and historical. The people who produce knowledge reflect their interest in the knowledge they produce. Feminists believe that the role of a scientist is not just to describe and analyze reality but to change it. This argument has been supported by the motto “Personal is political”.

Donna Haraway (1988) claims that knowledge is situated and perspectival but not fixed, static or stable. The exploration of the self or a particular subjective position is the first step in formulating a feminist perspective. In feminist standpoint theory, experience is central to feminist political, critical and textual practices because their attempt is one of the major strand of theorizing experience which depends on consciousness-raising activities and has led to the contribution into feminist epistemologies (Hughes 2002:153). Thus, all analyses of experience require engagement with theorizing.

Although this book engages with a way of explanation which focuses on positivism and critical theory by their opposing claims as separate approaches because of pedagogical and analytical concerns, it does not mean that all scholars who define themselves as feminist have necessarily an approach against positivism. At the same time, most feminists separate themselves from positivists by arguing that science is not universal. This means that all theoretical approaches have intertwined relationship when we deeply investigate the steps of epistemology and methodology within a theory. Exclusively, this interrelated understanding of the world, knowledge production and methodological concerns demonstrate that the multiplex approach would meet the needs of scholars to explain the complexity of the social world.

Similarly, in feminist standpoint theory different point of views are constructed by personal experiences so that there are different phrases which displays the formation processes of epistemological approaches which lead to different relevant methodological forms. Early versions of feminist standpoint theory suggested that reality could be accessed through political struggle and, in consequence, that there is a 'real' reality to be known so that this structure can be changed with an active engagement and struggle. In order to deeply understand the methodological approach which has been developed in feminism and also trace the different conceptualization and knowledge production in different waves of feminism, the classification of feminist standpoint as materialist, achievement and cyborg by Hughes would be a guide.



- The oppressed alone can understand the experience of other oppressed.
- This is why only a woman can understand a woman's experience.
- A man cannot understand and represent a woman's experience.

- Not all women can understand women's experience because they speak with the language of the oppressor & perpetuate it.
- One must gain critical consciousness through struggle which is an achievement.

- There is no standard coherent women's identity & standpoint because nature & technology get mixed into our lives which has great impact on our experiences as women.

Figure 8.6: A Comparison Between Different Feminist Approaches

3. The Materialist Standpoint

Standpoint theory emphasizes that experience brings the knowledge and understanding of certain positions. Most feminists give utmost importance to the historical materialist approach of Marxism but also criticizes its failure in demonstrating the gendered dimension in capitalist production systems. Materialist standpoint in feminism underlines that the material relationships and structures we are in can be understood only partially. Those in a dominant role (i.e. males) will view social reality in a partial and perverse manner. The governing class (i.e. males) structures the material relationships we are living within. The reality of social relations and change must be fought for by using social analysis because of the dominance of masculine opinions.

Women live in a sexual division of labor in material life. This has become the focus of analysis by feminists since the experience of women is what gives the epistemological basis of analysis. However, it also explores the political intentions behind the methodology used in research. In this feminist standpoint, activity is epistemology. As Hartsock maintains "Feminism as a mode of analysis leads us to respect experience and differences, to respect people enough to believe that they are in the best possible position to make their own revolution" (1998: 40). Thus, it requires both theoretical and political activity to be able to go under the surface of appearances to reveal the real but concealed social relationships (Hughes 2002:158). However, giving epistemic privilege to those who have direct experience to understand the context of women and oppressed leads a limit and misunderstanding that direct access to an experience is sufficient for political consciousness.

When we look at the varying approaches by feminists in a historical manner, materialist standpoint show some similarities to the commonly shared ontological and epistemological assumptions of the first and second waves of feminism over time. These waves have demonstrated the subordinated positions and experiences of women in political structures, capitalist systems and also household mechanism. The feminist theory during these waves demanded the rights the men possessed at that time like voting, private property, access to labor force, equal rights in private and public sphere. Especially, second wave feminism uses also the motto "The personal is political." However, keep in your mind that although different waves have emerged based on the critique of previous wave, still in different countries and contexts some waves of feminism are more effective than the others independently the timeline they emerged.

4. The Achievement Standpoint

Experience is the most stressing point in standpoint theory but this approach also comes with the question "Does direct experience or describing the gendered experiences of women can provide the tools to change the social structure?" In achievement standpoint theory, the individuals who experience this gendered social world or the scholars documenting the experiences can not necessarily achieve to change the "reality" of women rather they have to politically engaged to struggle with the dominant power mechanisms. Thus, a standpoint can only be achieved through forms of critical consciousness, reflexivity and struggle. Standpoint theorists have pointed out that standpoint is an achievement. Knowledge and their reality only emerges through the struggles that the oppressed wage against their oppressors (Harding, 1987). A feminist standpoint is, therefore, not a perspective but an achievement.

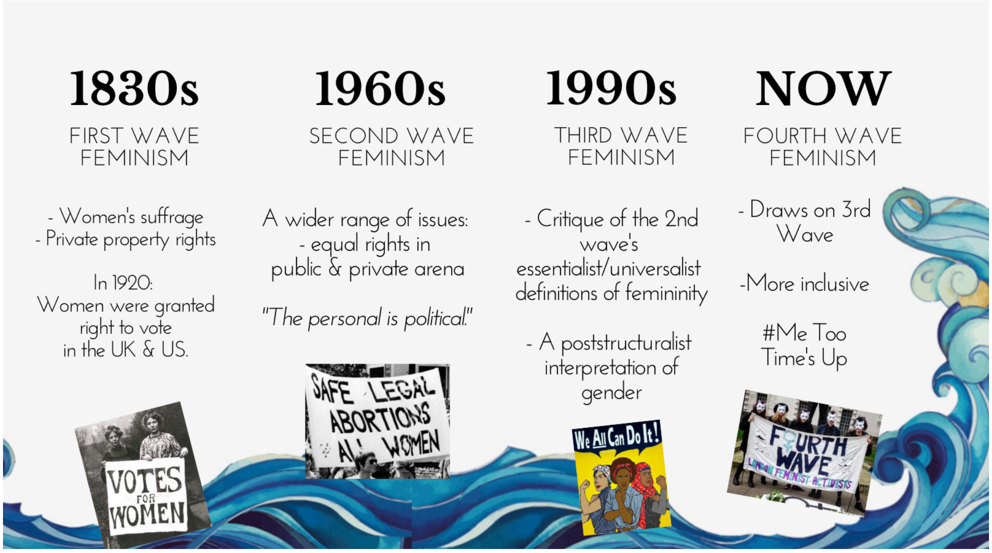

1830s
FIRST WAVE FEMINISM
- Women's suffrage
- Private property rights
In 1920:
Women were granted right to vote in the UK & US.
VOTES FOR WOMEN
1960s
SECOND WAVE FEMINISM
A wider range of issues:
- equal rights in public & private arena
"The personal is political"
SAFE LEGAL ABORTIONS ALL WOMEN
1990s
THIRD WAVE FEMINISM
- Critique of the 2nd wave's essentialist/universalist definitions of femininity
- A poststructuralist interpretation of gender
We All Can Do It!
NOW
FOURTH WAVE FEMINISM
- Draws on 3rd Wave
-More inclusive
#Me Too
Time's Up
FOURTH WAVE
LONDON FEMINIST ACTIVISTS

Figure 8.7: The Waves of Feminism

The achievement standpoint theory reflects also the discussions within the late years of second wave feminism and the third wave feminism which problematize the knowledge production and presentation of certain essentialist and universal definitions of women by certain group of women. Especially, relating to the postcolonial criticism, black women movements question "How the knowledge is produced within feminist epistemology and for whom?" They criticize that the definition of "ideal" women and explanations about the need of women in a society given by dominant women group or power relations can not correspond the same in a different society. This was a turning point to come up with a different epistemological and methodological perspective in feminism because the experiences of black women and women from different contexts based on different epistemological processes and need different methodological approaches. Especially, within the postcolonial theory scholars like Spivak (1983) was asking the very important question how certain disadvantaged, oppressed in other words subaltern groups can speak on behalf of themselves. Thus, the question was "what will be achieved for which subject position and by whom?" To answer this question, Haraway proposed the metaphor of Cyborg to denote the fragmented character of subject of our times.

5. Cyborg Standpoints

Cyborg is a construction of the postmodern subject. The cyborg is the multiply located subject of the global order that illustrates how postmodern feminist epistemology can be synthesized with standpoint epistemology. Cyborg is a combination of machines and women. Basically cyborg is used by Haraway as a symbol to indicate that there is no single womanhood to be discovered or achieved. So it is still being continuously constructed. In order to discover something it should be there and you should go and discover it. Thus, Cyborg is the multiple subject position in the worldwide order (Hughes, 2002, p.163). Our experiences are built on the ideas we have at our disposal and modern theories are limited to provide adequate explanatory frameworks to understand them (Hughes, 2002, p.164). The production of universalistic theories misses the diversity of experiences and realities in a postmodern, global age of informatics. The cyborg stresses the situated and perspectival nature of knowledge, rejects universalism and contains multiplicity and contradiction.

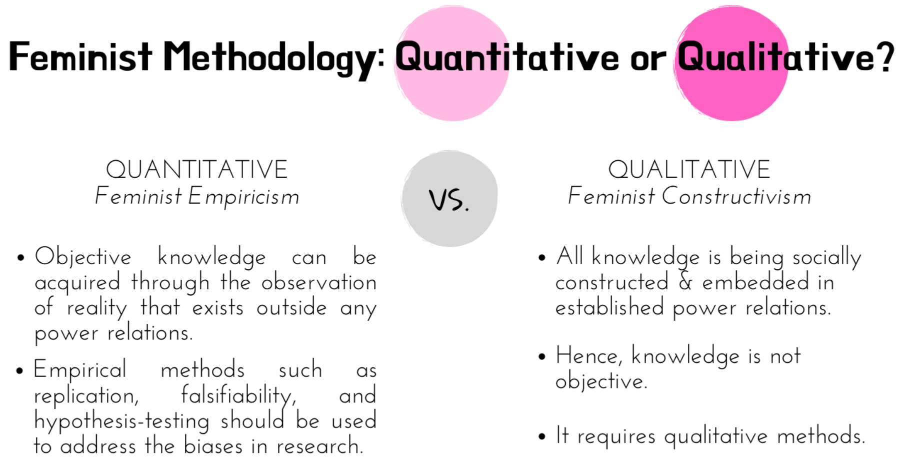
The postmodern and poststructuralist approach have been also effective within the transformations of approaches to feminism. Especially, by the end of 1990s the performative interpretation of gender roles and the hegemony of normative understanding of femininity and masculinity have become the most stressed issues especially to remind the various subject positions which may be created upon different practices and conceptual frameworks. Thus, by criticizing the essentialist and universalistic definitions of women, third wave feminism also focuses on the complexity of woman agency. Especially, against the stereotypical representation of Muslim women within liberal feminism, some scholars have been very influential to rethink the crystalized definitions of femininity which excludes the other examples. After the questions by certain anthropologists like Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) who is emphasizing the American intervention in Iraq with the question "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?," even the conceptualization of freedom and women rights have been rethought within the power relations and hegemony of certain epistemologies. Anthropologist Saba Mahmood (2005) published a very crucial ethnographic work about the "piety movement" of some Egyptian Muslim women in a mosques of Cairo as a criticism of secular and liberal feminist understanding in which the subject positions of Muslim women and their own definitions of freedom have been ignored. Within this new theorization of agency, her work was the pioneer especially by her discussion of Islamic concept al-haya (shyness, modesty) and its relation to ethical self-formation. She underlines that the conceptualization of freedom may differ according to different experiences of women in the relevant local context. The discussion of different conceptualizations and understandings out of the hegemonic knowledge production remind us the postcolonial critics which underline the embedded assumptions of colonial logic within the social structure and feminist approaches. After 2010, the poststructuralist approaches within fourth wave also lead emergence of different feminisms like Islamic Feminism, Marginal Feminism with the aim of being inclusive for different subjective positions and approaches.

6. Main Characteristics of Feminist Methodology

As it is discussed so far, the methodological approach of feminism based on different theoretical and conceptual explorations within the political climate of the time. The questioning within feminism like 'who has the power to know what, and how power is implicated in the process of producing knowledge' shows that the feminist methodology entails some theory of power. The feminist methodology assumes that knowledge is not separable from experience because knowledge of social life is a historical product, produced in particular social, political and intellectual conditions and situations. And it resides in the subjective experience of the oppressed. Feminist methodology implies that researcher bear moral responsibility for their political actions and practices. Feminist investigations of the social world are concerned not just with truth, but also with how knowledge is produced and authorized. Feminist methodology is initially hard for students to grasp because different feminists take different positions in claiming that their knowledge is both in some sense ‘believable’ and also in some sense ‘feminist’. This is sometimes dealt with by referring to ‘feminist methodologies’, rather than ‘methodology.’

Feminists create choices about how their knowledge can be produced and justified (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.2). Feminist methodological methods involve decisions between distinct strategies to identify associations between thoughts, experience and reality or to claim the impossibility or irrelevance of specifying such associations (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.2). Feminist understanding is based on gender-based social life experiences and depends on judgments about the justice of social interactions. Feminist scientists had to challenge what counts (can be replicated by other scientists) as credible information and valid knowledge (representing reality) and how such knowledge can be accomplished. To challenge current understanding of women's inferiority and to take their difficulties seriously, feminists must either validate their claims to understanding of social life/ gender by current science techniques or suggest other criteria to justify their understanding and how it is generated (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.13). Feminist argues to understand what is politically charged with people's life and relationships. They defy patriarchal ' truths ' which are obviously superior to males by females; they defy reasoning and science techniques which are blind to masculine dominance (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.16). Whatever their epistemological and ontological distinctions, what separates feminist scientists (of whatever sex) is some mutual political and ethical commitment that makes them responsible to a group of females with common moral and political interests (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.16). Disputes over how, or whether, links can ever be established and ever-known social reality provide the methodological context within which feminist methodological methods have evolved (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.10).

Feminist methodology is characteristic to the point that it is shaped by feminist theory, politics and ethics and is based on the knowledge of women. The ontology, epistemology, subjectivity, politics, ethics and the social situation of researchers can not be independent of feminist methodology (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.16). When we position the feminist scholars methodologically, some of them give preference to quantitative research, while some others prefer qualitative according to their ontological and epistemological argumentation. Although you will review these methodological approaches in the coming chapters of this book, it is crucial to briefly mention the methodological preferences of feminists. In quantitative methodologies, the epistemological premise is that objective knowledge can be acquired through the observation of reality that exists outside any power relations. Empirical methods such as replication, falsifiability, and hypothesis-testing through surveys, statistical measurements should be used to address the biases in research definitions, concepts, methods, theory generation, and outcomes. In qualitative research approach on the other hand, the accepted premise is that all knowledge is being socially constructed and embedded in established power relations. Hence, knowledge is not objective but based on subjective experience, it requires a deeper understanding and thick description through qualitative methods like ethnography, participant observation, in depth interviews, discourse analysis, content analysis and phenomenology. By taking into account that feminists give utmost value to the personal experiences of women, qualitative methods are more likely to be the first preference by most of the feminists.



Feminist Methodology: Quantitative or Qualitative?

QUANTITATIVE
Feminist Empiricism

- Objective knowledge can be acquired through the observation of reality that exists outside any power relations.
- Empirical methods such as replication, falsifiability, and hypothesis-testing should be used to address the biases in research.

VS.

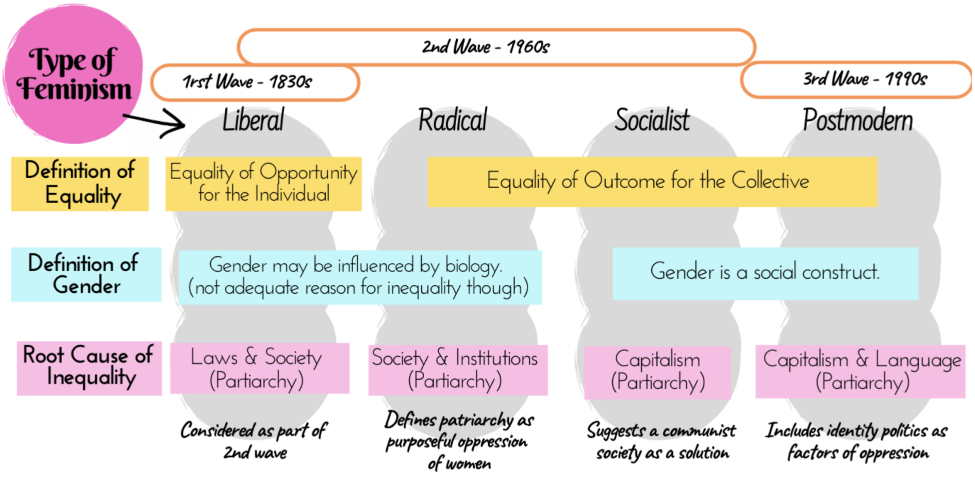
QUALITATIVE
Feminist Constructivism

- All knowledge is being socially constructed & embedded in established power relations.
- Hence, knowledge is not objective.
- It requires qualitative methods.

Figure 8.8: Quantitative and qualitative methodologies of feminism

7. Limitations and Dilemmas in Feminist Methodological Approach

As it is discussed, the standpoint theory and the historical emergences of waves of feminism illustrate that there are several varying approaches which based on the critique of previous arguments. Because of the emphasis on experience, feminists have been criticized for failing to produce adequately rational, scientific or unbiased knowledge. This approach also is describes as a self-centric approach which position women-centric worldview as opposed to men-centric one. Thus, feminists are charged with failing the test of producing generally valid and authoritative knowledge. Western feminists have been extensively criticized for universalizing the Euro-centric experience of women to all other societies and relying on an undifferentiated category of 'women' as if 'women' were a unified category of being throughout history and all over the world. They also question whether it is possible to produce knowledge of gender when gendered power relations are only one aspect of people's lives and only a partial understanding of social relations.



2nd Wave - 1960s

1rst Wave - 1830s

3rd Wave - 1990s

Type of Feminism	Liberal	Radical	Socialist	Postmodern
Definition of Equality	Equality of Opportunity for the Individual	Equality of Outcome for the Collective		
Definition of Gender	Gender may be influenced by biology. (not adequate reason for inequality though)		Gender is a social construct.	
Root Cause of Inequality	Laws & Society (Partiarchy)	Society & Institutions (Partiarchy)	Capitalism (Partiarchy)	Capitalism & Language (Partiarchy)
	Considered as part of 2nd wave	Defines patriarchy as purposeful oppression of women	Suggests a communist society as a solution	Includes identity politics as factors of oppression

Figure 8.9: A summary of different feminist approaches

Within the feminist theory and methodological approach, the question about the possibility of feminist research also has been a major criticism and focus in contemporary discussion of feminism. Especially, through different examples from the world the challenges, controversies and dilemmas of feminist methodological approach have been discussed by the feminists. These debates are mostly about the subjective position of the feminist researcher and the dilemmas she or he can confront during the research process as an insider or outsider in the fieldwork. By stressing the question "…how we as feminist researchers are constituted as socially, culturally and historically specific subjects within a particular global configuration of economic and political powers" (Wolf, 1996, p. xi) Diane L. Wolf investigates several examples in her edited book Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork about the challenges and difficulties of feminist research but also shows how these challenges also may provide rich, deep and nuanced understanding of certain contexts.

The Politics of Piety:
The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject

By Saba Mahmood (2005)

"The Subject of Freedom"

Over the last two decades, a key question has occupied many feminist theorists: how should issues of historical and cultural specificity inform both the analytics and the politics of any feminist project? While this question has led to serious attempts at integrating issues of sexual, racial, class, and national difference within feminist theory, questions regarding religious difference have remained relatively unexplored. The vexing relationship between feminism and religion is perhaps most manifest in discussions of Islam. This is due in part to the historically contentious relationship that Islamic societies have had with what has come to be called "the West, "but also due to the challenges that contemporary Islamist movements pose to secular liberal politics of which feminism has been an integral (if critical) part. The suspicion with which many feminists tended to view Islamist movements only intensified in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks launched against the United States, and the immense groundswell of anti-Islamic sentiment that has followed since. If supporters of the Islamist movement were disliked before for their social conservatism and their rejection of liberal values (key among them "women's freedom"), their now almost taken-for-granted association with terrorism has served to further reaffirm their status as agents of a dangerous irrationality.

Women's participation in, and support for, the Islamist movement provokes strong responses from feminists across a broad range of the political spectrum. One of the most common reactions is the supposition that women Islamist supporters are pawns in a grand patriarchal plan, who, if freed from their bondage, would naturally express their instinctual abhorrence for the traditional Islamic mores used to enchain them. Even those analysts who are skeptical of the false consciousness thesis underpinning this approach nonetheless continue to frame the issue in terms of a fundamental contradiction: why would such a large number of women across the Muslim world actively support a movement that seems inimical to their "own interests and agendas," especially at a historical moment when these women appear to have more emancipatory possibilities available to them? Despite important differences between these two reactions, both share the assumption that there is something intrinsic to women that should predispose them to oppose the practices, values, and injunctions that the Islamist movement embodies. Yet, one may ask, is such an assumption valid? What is the history by which we have come to assume its truth? What kind of a political imagination would lead one to think in this manner? More importantly, if we discard such an assumption, what other analytical tools might be available to ask a different set of questions about women's participation in the Islamist movement?

In this book I will explore some of the conceptual challenges that women's involvement in the Islamist movement poses to feminist theory in particular, and to secular liberal thought in general, through an ethnographic account of an urban women's mosque movement that is part of the larger Islamic Revival in Cairo, Egypt. For two years (1995-97) I conducted fieldwork with a movement in which women from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds provided lessons to one another that focused on the teaching and studying of Islamic scriptures, social practices, and forms of bodily comportment considered germane to the cultivation of the ideal virtuous self. The burgeoning of this movement marks the first time in Egyptian history that such a large number of women have held public meetings in mosques to teach one another Islamic doctrine, thereby altering the historically male centered character of mosques as well as Islamic pedagogy. At the same time, women's religious participation within such public arenas of Islamic pedagogy is critically structured by, and serves to uphold, a discursive tradition that regards subordination to a transcendent will (and thus, in many instances, to male authority) as its coveted goal."

Practice:

1. How you can interpret the epistemological and methodological approach of Saba Mahmood's work?
2. What is the theoretical and conceptual focus of this work?
3. In which way does her book criticize the liberal feminist approach and contribute to feminist theory?

Key Words

dialectical materialism:	the theory that argues that economic structures of a particular society generate its cultural features such as ideas, art and institutions. Economic structures ("base") determine all other elements of social life ("superstructure"). The ideas and beliefs that people have in a class society reflect social institutions which are themselves the result of economic structures.
historical materialism:	history is determined by the production relations (class relations) and the development of modes of production. Karl Marx (1818-1883) considers the confrontation between the dominant and subordinate classes as the engine of historical change.
praxis:	social scientists are not conceived as "neutral observers" but as "agents of change." By meddling with political conflicts from the side of the oppressed (whether workers, women or colonized people), social scientists experience the real mechanisms lying behind apparent social phenomena and attempt to change the existing social order.
standpoint:	social scientists who want to describe "real" mechanisms of the society should take the standpoint of the colonized/subaltern. Indeed, only the colonized/subaltern physically and mentally experiences the material and cultural oppression of the Western colonial system. In other words, social scientists must adopt the standpoint of lower classes (proletariat) in order

	to interpret the world from this side of the dialectical materialism.
	the word standpoint involves a certain worldview and position which gives you all the knowledge through experience. It is a duality of reality and shows the deep-level "surface." It also means the logic that misinterprets the greater truth and transposes it (Harding, 1987, p. 285).
enlightenment:	in his essay "What is Enlightenment?," Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) defines the Enlightenment as "free-thinking," permitting individuals to reach universal philosophical and political principles by themselves. Through an unrestricted use of reason, individuals are able to establish a new social order based on justice, freedom, fraternity and knowledge.
rationality:	refers firstly to a cognitive faculty (explaining phenomena with reason-based thinking), and secondly to a moral virtue (being "mature enough" to think independently without the need of exterior references outside of reason).
negative liberty:	the absence of apparent obstacles and constraints external to individuals.
positive liberty:	the possibility for individuals to self-determine their destiny and to design their own ideals and moral principles from rational thinking.
real democracy:	a regime that guarantees the application of positive liberty (ex: republic regime insists on

	citizens' participation in collective deliberation).
reified democracy:	a regime that only guarantees negative liberty. Citizens are only equal before the law, not in practice (ex: liberal democracy insists on a non-intrusive constitutional state).
alienation:	refers primarily to a type of exploitation that interferes with full, free human development. It also carries the meaning of "being deprived from positive liberty without being aware of it" (ex: a worker that supports capitalism, or a woman that supports patriarchy).
emancipation:	denotes freedom "from oppressive conditions and constraining chains." It also refers to the movement from negative liberty to positive liberty (ex: from being a worker in capitalistic society to being a worker in a communist society; from being a woman in a patriarchal society to being a woman in a feminist society).
communicative action:	citizens use language as a medium to elucidate practical and normative public issues (ex: should we choose solution X or Y?). Based on rationality, "language no longer serves merely to *transmit* and *actualize* prelinguistically guaranteed agreements, but more and more to bring about rationally motivated agreements as well" (Habermas 1985: 107). Habermas conceives communicative action as the ideal procedure to reach consensus in the public sphere.

deliberative democracy:	a regime based on domination-free communicative action. Citizens deliberate public issues by using rationality.
gender:	From the 1950s, gender has been used to differentiate between biological sex and a distinctive social position (gender role) and/or gender identity. However, the emergence of gender as an analytical category within the feminist theory begins by the end of 1970s. By feminists, it refers the social organization of the relationship between sexes. Thus, the knowledge of the gender roles in society is acquired through experiences and performances and creates certain norms on femininity and masculinity which are socially constructed.
Feminism:	The belief in gender equality in society, economy, and politics. While originating mainly in the Western academia, feminism is expressed globally and is represented by numerous organizations committed to activity on behalf of the rights and interests of women by varying and opposing approaches.
Feminist methodology:	It is a study strategy planned by feminist scientists in reaction to the concerns about the boundaries of traditional methodology in order to understand women's experiences and those marginalized in scholarly studies.
sexism:	Sexism, sexual or gender-based bias or discrimination, particularly against females. Although its origin is uncertain, the word sexism arose through the 1980s from the ‘second-wave’ feminism of the 1960s and was

	most probably based on the word racism (prejudice or race-based discrimination) of the civil rights movement.
Islamic Feminism:	Islamic feminism has emerged in the diaspora and has become common among Western converted societies. After the turn of the new century, Islamic feminism, which became increasingly visible in the 1990s, continues to develop. It is a worldwide phenomenon not confined to any geographic region but debated by several academic groups with an emphasis on the controversial arguments it brings.
patriarchy:	Patriarchy is a social system where males hold main power and predominate in political management positions, moral authority control of the property, and social privilege.
gender equality:	Gender equality, also known as sexual equality or gender equality, is the state of equal access to resources and possibilities irrespective of gender, including financial involvement and decision-making; and the state of equal appreciation of distinct behaviors, desires and needs regardless of gender.

Key People

Karl Marx (1818–1883): A German socialist, philosopher, sociologist, historian, and economist. He co-published in 1848 the *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (or *The Communist Manifesto*) with Friedrich Engels. He also authored *Das Kapital* in 1867. In addition, he wrote many other books and essays with Friedrich Engels, all of which came to form the basis of the body of thought known as Marxism. Socialist and communist movements took their inspiration from Marx's works.

Friedrich Engels (1820-1895): A German socialist, philosopher, friend, sponsor and collaborator of Karl Marx. He co-published *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) with Karl Marx and edited the second and third volumes of *Das Kapital* after Marx's death. Socialist and communist movements were highly influenced by Engels' works.

Walter Benjamin (1892-1940): Eclectic German philosopher and member of the School of Frankfurt who worked on several topics such as Marxism, arts, industrial societies, mysticism and education. He is well-known for the essays *The Task of the Translator* (1923), *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (*1936), and *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940).

Max Horkheimer (1895–1973): a leader of the Frankfurt School who served as the director of the Institute and Professor of Social Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt from 1930–1933, and again from 1949–1958. He had to flee the Nazi regime in the 1930's. Horkheimer is well-known for the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), which was co-authored with Theodor Adorno. He also wrote *Authority and the Family* (1936) and *Eclipse of reason* (1941).

Theodor Adorno (1903-1969): A German philosopher who also wrote on sociology, psychology, and musicology. He was a member of the Frankfurt School of critical theory. His major books include *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947; *Dialectic of Enlightenment*). He also co-authored with Horkheimer *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (1949; *Philosophy of Modern Music*), *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950, with others) and *Ästhetische Theorie* (1970; "*Aesthetic Theory*").

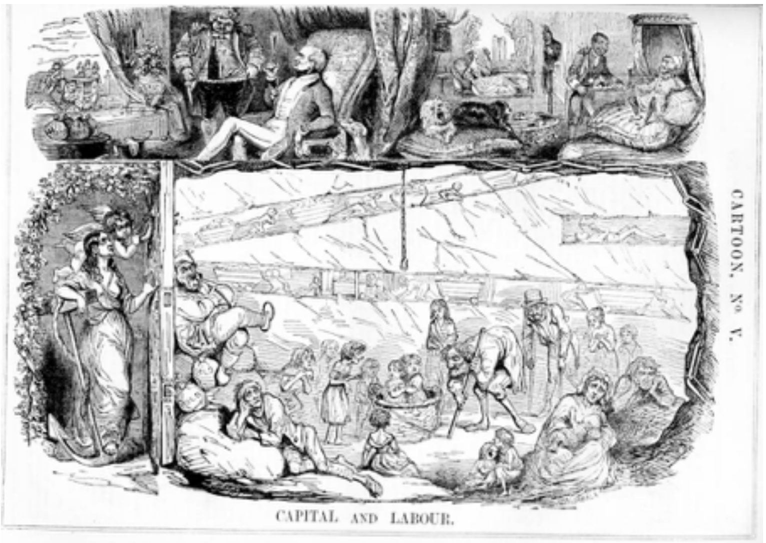
Jürgen Habermas (1929-): A German philosopher and sociologist in the tradition of critical theory and pragmatism. He is well-known for his works on communicative rationality, deliberative democracy and the public sphere. Among his extensive works, we can mention *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985) and *The Inclusion of the Other* (1996).

Summary

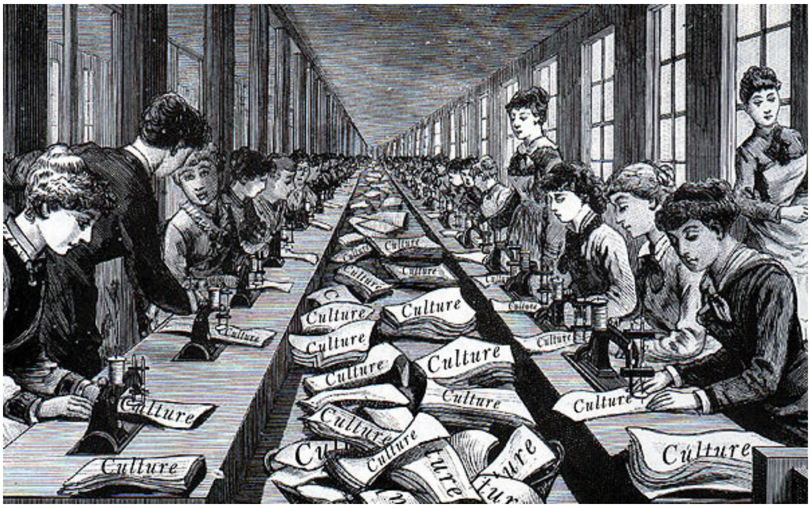
- Critical approaches include Marxism, the Frankfurt School (Critical Theory), feminism and postcolonial theory. They all reject the assumptions of positivism.
- The Marxist materialist approach is based on the assumption that the economic structures of a particular society generate its cultural features such as ideas, art and institutions (dialectical materialism).
- Marxist theory claims that conflict between classes (dominant *versus* subordinated) is the engine of history (historical materialism).
- For critical theory, reality is a virtual reality that is “shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values” (Lincoln et al 2011: 100)
- According to critical theories, social scientists must either guide the subordinate class in order to awaken it from its “false consciousness” (avant-garde) or to take the standpoint of the subordinate (proletariat, woman or colonized) in order to understand the “real” mechanisms that are lying behind the capitalist society.
- All feminist analyses of experience have a moral and political stance.
- “Facts” cannot be separated from values.
- Objectivity is not possible.
- All knowledge is situated and perspectival.
- Reality could be accessed through political struggle and, in consequence, there is a 'real' reality to be known.
- This knowledge of the 'real' reality would show us the truth of social relations.
- The feminist standpoint theory must be rooted in women's experiences.
- They problematize the idea that a particular quality was attributed to one gender.
- Inequality between men and women is universal.

Activity

Comment on the following pictures by using the theoretical concepts discussed in this chapter.


CARTOON, Nº V.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR.



Dig Deep

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Chapter Nine

POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Focus Questions

- ◊ What is colonization, and who are the colonizers?
- ◊ What is the impact of colonization on the colonized?
- ◊ What is the impact of colonization on the colonizer?
- ◊ Is dialectical materialism an adequate method to study the relationship between the colonized and colonizers?
- ◊ How do the colonized reach against the reality constructed by the colonizer?
- ◊ Can the colonized construct an alternative reality against the reality constructed by the colonizers and imposed on them?
- ◊ Can the colonized refrain from using Eurocentric social sciences to study their own society?
- ◊ How successful has postcolonial theory been in fulfilling its premises?
- ◊ To what extent do the postcolonial scholars recognize alternative ontologies and epistemologies and employ a non-Eurocentric vocabulary?

The term “Postcolonial theory” includes a wide range of social approaches that all attempt to disclose the way the Western imperialism imposes material, cultural and moral rules on non-Western societies, building a world that serves Western countries’ interests. Orientalism, subaltern studies, race studies, creolization theory, ambivalence and hybridity, double-consciousness, worldviews in collision, etc., are all approaches, theories or perspectives that can be placed under the umbrella of postcolonial theory.

Postcolonialism challenges the way we "know" the world and invites social scientists to be aware about their own Western epistemological biases and to include dialectics between the Western colonizer and the non-Western colo-nized in their analyses of the society. According to postcolonial thinkers, social scientists that do not take imperialistic dialectics into account cannot understand the "real" mechanisms that shape the society.

1. Colonial trauma as a starting point

The starting point of postcolonial theory is reflection about colonial accounts of subordination, spoliation and extermination. The rise of European domination over the rest of the world from the end of the fifteenth century led to systematic mass murders as well as the destruction of non-European cultures, knowledges, ethics and aesthetics. The Spanish conquest of the American continent led to the extermination of 90% of the Mesoamerican native inhabitants in less than one century (Adams, 2000: 12); between 11 and 17 million men, women and children were deported and enslaved under the transatlantic trade slave from the late 15th to 19th century; and millions of people died in terrible conditions following the colonial conquests in Africa, India, Asia and in the Pacific from the mid-18th to the end of the twentieth century. Racist jurisdictions (such as the code noir), apartheids, concentration camps, collective castrations and human zoos (the last of which took place in Belgium in 1958) are all examples of atrocious institutions that Western powers first invented and applied in the colonial context.

In sum, postcolonial thinkers analyze past and present colonial mechanisms that are shaping societies in the world.

Photograph: The postcolonial philosopher Edouard Glissant in front of the memorial of the slave trade (Island of Martinique, Caribbean Sea. Extracted from the documentary "la creolization du monde", 2010).

2. Material and cultural domination of the West over non-Western societies

Postcolonial thinkers apply Marxist dialectical materialism to the frame of the Westernization of the world. Since material power relations determine the development of ideas and culture, then in practice, the rise of Western capitalistic colonization of the world- manifested in maritime conquests, slavery or colonization from the 16th century- not only reshaped the world eco-nomically and politically but also culturally and intellectually. In other words, Western colonizers did not only impose their material domination upon the rest of the world but also their intellectual outlooks over knowledge, truth, aesthetics, ethics, etc.

As a result, Western theories on ontology, epistemology and methodology became dominant and tended to erase non-Western perspectives. This "Westernization" of the world reshaped how the non-Western peoples understand:

- their inner world and behaviors (micro level),
- their intersubjective relations (meso level), and
- their institutions, politics and economics (macro level).

The postcolonialist thinker Walter D. Mignolo draws on Anibal Quijano's notion of 'coloniality of power' (colonialidad del poder) in order to explain the reconfiguration of the world by European powers:

> "Quijano identifies coloniality of power with capitalism and its consolidation in Europe from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Coloniality of power implies and constitutes itself, according to Quijano, through the following:
>
> 1. The classification and reclassification of the planet population- the concept of 'culture' becomes crucial in this task of classifying and reclassifying.
> 2. An institutional structure functional to articulate and manage such classifications (state apparatus, universities, church, etc.).
> 3. The definition of spaces appropriate to such goals.

4. An epistemological perspective from which to articulate the meaning and profile of the new matrix of power and from which the new production of knowledge could be channeled.

   This is, in a nutshell, what for Quijano constitutes the coloniality of power by way of which the entire planet, including its continental division (Africa, America, Europe), becomes articulated in such production of knowledge and classificatory apparatus.” (Mignolo, Local Histories, Global Designs, Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking, 2000: 17)

For some postcolonial thinkers, such as Ramón Grosfoguel or Anibal Quijano (1928-2018), cultural oppression works according to its own mechanisms, independent from material oppression. This approach puts the opposition between the colonizer and the colonized at the same level as- or even higher than - the opposition between bourgeois class and proletariat class. Put differently, alongside economic dialectics between rich and poor, there are cultural and intellectual dialectics between Western white groups (whether rich or poor) and non-Western non-white groups (whether rich or poor).

Therefore, westernization does not end once colonies get their political independence. Westernization keeps expanding and invading non-Western minds, actions and institutions until today. Grosfoguel makes the distinction between colonialism- i.e. Western military-political-economic control of non-Western countries- and coloniality that refers to an all-intrusive mechanism that shapes non-Western societies.

“I conceptualize the coloniality of power as an entanglement of multiple and heterogeneous hierarchies (‘heterarchies’) of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic, and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all other global power structures. What is new in the ‘coloniality of power’ perspective is how the idea of race and racism becomes the organizing principle that structures all of the multiple hierarchies of the world-system.”

(Grosfoguel, “World-Systems Analysis in the Context of Transmodernity, Border Thinking, and Global Coloniality,” 2006: 172)

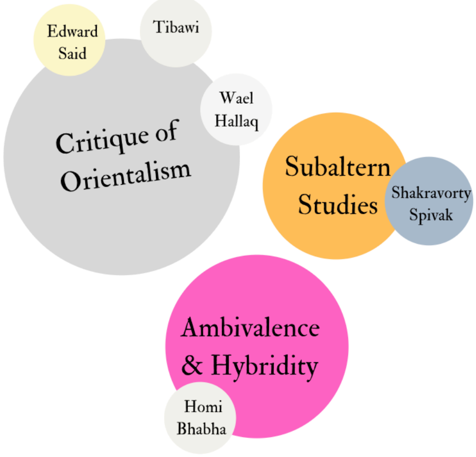
Postcolonial perspective on “coloniality of power” is pretty close to Foucault’s notion of “discourse.” In *Orientalism* (1978) -the book that established Postcolonialism as an academic discipline- Edward Said (1935-2003) explicitly says he took his intellectual inspiration from Foucault’s works. Indeed, in his first studies, Foucault (1926-1985) demonstrates how individual’s intimate behaviors are actually shaped by power relations at the societal level. In the following quotation, the French philosopher applies the notion of “discourse” to sexuality in France.

> “What is at issue, briefly, is the over-all ‘discursive fact,’ the way in which sex is ‘put into discourse.’ Hence, too, my main concern will be to locate the forms of power, the channels it takes, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous and individual modes of behavior, the paths that give it access to the rare or scarcely perceivable forms of desire, how it penetrates and controls everyday pleasure-all this entailing effects that may be those of refusal, blockage, and invalidation, but also incitement and intensification: in short, the ‘polymorphous techniques of power.’”
>
> (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*, 1976: 11)

3. Explanatory Stance of Postcolonial Theory: Deconstructing the Imperialist Discourse

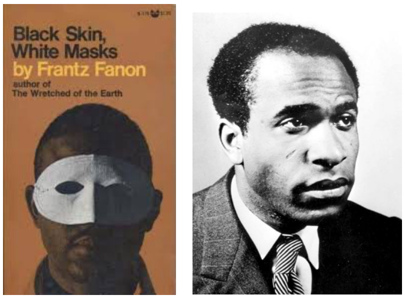
Postcolonial theory aims at deconstructing the underlying discourse behind Western oppression of the non-Western world. As a result, they firstly attempt to explain this discourse and secondly try to change society based upon postcolonial understanding.

For instance, Edward Said demonstrates in *Orientalism* how Western thinkers created the category of “Orient” and constantly attributed to it degrading traits such as “traditional,” “barbaric,” “folkloric,” “passional,” “instinctive,” etc. Since the mid-18th century, the “Orient” represents the a-historical, essentially hostile Other, incapable of rational thinking, objectivity, discipline and civilization. As a result of this systematic diminution, the West claimed the monopoly over anything connected to human beings’ creative spirit, i.e. science exclusively referred to Western science, philosophy to Western philosophy, architecture to Western architecture, literature to Western literature, etc. In other words, Said highlights Western intellectual biases- i.e. Eurocentrism- and calls for reconsidering intellectual and cultural productions of Eastern societies without Western misconceptions.



Similarly, thinkers of Subaltern studies such as Rabajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak deconstruct the Eurocentric classical history of India by developing new historical accounts that include voices and views of underclasses and lay people. While they disclose the ways British colonizers impacted Indian social order (see: Rabajit Guha's *A Rule of Property for Bengal*, 1963), they also underline the role of subaltern groups (oppressed classes, castes, genders, races and the like) in the course of history. Their goals are both to reclaim their history and to empower subaltern groups with the **agency** to shape knowledge, ethics and aesthetics on their own. For instance, in her book *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) Spivak problematized the subject position of those groups who have been systematically oppressed for centuries. She discusses the dilemma of the subalterns who express their conditions and reclaim their liberty in the languages of the oppressors (English and French, for instance). Spivak asks what kind of language the subaltern would possess after centuries of domination.

Therefore, postcolonial studies also focus on the way native colonized people have assimilated and reproduced the Western discourse. Syed Hussein Alatas (1928-2007) conceptualized this latter posture as **captive mind** that is an uncritical and imitative mode of thinking that blindly applies Western social sciences. These latter sciences have, in contexts such as the Republic of Turkey, even been used as tools for excluding other knowledge traditions. In his article "Intellectual Dependency: Late Ottoman intellectuals between *fiqh* and social science" (2007), Recep Şentürk demonstrates how the state of Turkey attempted to impose social sciences- considered as the leading light of modernity- upon Turkish academic and intellectual circles. Likewise, in his famous *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), the psychologist and thinker Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) also draws on this **identity and intellectual dispossession** and demonstrates how the racist structure of Western colonial ruling creates altogether “the feeling of inferiority of the colonized” and “the European’s feeling of superiority.” In other words, “it is the racist who creates inferiority [of the colonized]” (Frantz Fanon 1952: 69).



Photograph: On the left, cover of Frantz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks (Peau noire, masques blancs), 1952. A Black person is seeing the world through a white mask. On the right, a photograph of Frantz Fanon.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o also criticizes and deconstructs this colonial alienation. He argues the Western cultural colonialism systematically stigmatized African languages with negative attributes of backwardness, underdevelopment and misery. After having written many pieces in English, he militated in the 1970s for the development of African literature trends in African native languages. He wrote his most famous masterpieces in Kikuyu, one of the languages spoken in Kenya (see for instance: *Ngugi wa Mirii*, I Will Marry When I Want [theatre piece]; *Caitaani Mutharabaini,* Devil on the Cross [novel]; or *Maitu Njugira,* Mother Sing for Me [musical]). The philosophical goal of Ngugi wa Thiong'o is to **decolonize the mind**.

> “A Negro tells me his dream: “I had been walking for a long time, I was extremely exhausted, I had the impression that something was waiting for me, I climbed barricades and walls, I came into an empty hall, and from behind a door I heard noise. I hesitated before I went in, but finally I made up my mind and opened the door. In this second room there were white men, and I found that I too was white.” When I try to understand this dream, to analyze it, knowing that my friend has had problems in his career, I conclude that this dream fulfills an unconscious wish. But when, outside my psychoanalytic office, I have to incorporate my conclusions into the context of the world, I will assert:

1. My patient is suffering from an inferiority complex. His psychic structure is in danger of disintegration. What has to be done is to save him from this and, little by little, to rid him of this unconscious desire.
2. If he is overwhelmed to such a degree by the wish to be white, it is because he lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race; to the identical degree to which that society creates difficulties for him, he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation."

(Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952: 74)

4. Practical Stance: Re-reading the Social World through the Standpoint of the Colonized and the Subaltern

Postcolonial thinkers argue that social scientists who want to describe "real" mechanisms of the society should take the standpoint of the colonized and subaltern. Indeed, only the colonized and the subaltern physically and mentally experience the material and cultural oppression of the Western colonial system (Mbembe, 2001: 6-7). Therefore, they are the ones who can best understand, deconstruct and contest this system (or "discourse" or "coloniality of power").

5. "Feeling the world": Experiencing the Imperialist Reality

Although reason and science have long demonstrated the existence of only one unique human race (*homo sapiens*), subjective experiences show that the fact of being black in a society dominated by white people have deep consequences for the way we are considered, for access to public service, to employment, for representation in media, etc. Here, empirical experience contradicts the conclusions of rational science. The standpoint of being black (non-white) discloses many social realities that a white standpoint cannot even perceive.

"I sincerely believe that a subjective experience can be understood by others; and it would give me no pleasure to announce that the black problem is my problem and mine alone and that it is up to me to study it. But it does seem to me that M. Mannoni [a French white ethnologist who conducted a study on the psychological effects of colonialism] has not tried to feel himself into the despair of the man of color confronting the white man. In this work I have made it a point to convey the misery of the black man. Physically and affectively. I have not wished to be objective. Besides, that would be dishonest: It is not possible for me to be objective."

(Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952: 64)

6. Dealing with "double-consciousness"

Colonized and subaltern people not only experience imperialist reality but also the ambiguity of belonging to two identities, that is a non-Western one and a Western colonial one. In a way, they can understand both positions. The Afro-American W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) described what he called "double-consciousness" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903):

> "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He wouldn't bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face." (W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*,1903: 8)

The Sudanese novelist Tayeb Salih (1929-2009) depicts a similar psychological profile with the protagonist of his book *Mawsim al-hijra ilâ al-shamâl (Season of Migration to the North*, 1966):

Mustafa Sa'eed, a Sudanese man who studied in Europe, returns to his childhood village after years. He realizes then to what extent he has changed and how his identity is **in-between**, neither exactly from here (Sudan, the "South") nor from there (England, the "North"). Although he sharply criticizes the colonial powers and their bloody conquest, he admits that he assimilated many European features that distinguish him from his fellow townsmen. On the one hand he does not fit any fixed identities, while on the other he embraces all of them. In other words, his double consciousness brings him to a kind of universality.

Questions

- How do you perceive the notions of “double-consciousness” and “in-between”?
- Do you think significant analyses of the society can emerge from approaches that include the standpoints of both the colonized and colonizers?
- Concretely, what may such approaches look like?
- Can modern social sciences tolerate alternative epistemological approaches?

7. Normative Stance: Going Beyond the Dialectics between the Colonizers and the Colonized Peoples

Most postcolonial thinkers aim at building a world that goes beyond the dialectics between the colonizer and the colonized. Thinkers should develop concepts that avoid both self-colonialism (or self-orientalism) and blind hatred against Western culture as a whole. Deconstructing colonial discourse leads social scientists to propose alternative accounts to shape society, independent from essentialistic-nationalistic-closed destructive ideologies.

8. “Double-consciousness” as a fertile source against colonial oppression

According to Edouard Glissant (1928-2011), the double-consciousness that emerged from the confrontation between the colonizer and the colonized brings unexpected and original cultural developments: this is the ”creolization of the world.” For instance, the interactions between the colonizers and colonized people under the slavery regime in the Caribbean islands gave birth to Creole languages. Likewise, jazz music came out of the meeting between Afro-American musical themes and European musical instruments.

Glissant promotes the intertwining of cultures without undermining any of them. On the one hand, cultures and identities are not crystallized in monolithic forms and should thus be open to meeting, dialogue and diversity. On the other hand, each culture and identity provides its own genuine and original features that should not be repressed. By taking his inspiration from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of "rhizomes," Edouard Glissant calls for the rise of the culturally intertwined Whole-World (*le Tout-Monde*) as an alternative to current uniformizing capitalist globalization.

> "I call Whole-World our universe as it changes and continues through its exchanges and at the same time, our vision of it. The totality-world in its physical diversity and the representations that it gives us: we can no longer sing, tell, or work in the suffering of our only place, without plunging to the imaginary of this totality."
>
> (Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*: *Poétique IV*, 1997: 22)

Homi K. Bhabha, from India, also questions cross-cultural relations between the colonizers and the colonized peoples in similar terms. His concepts of "liminality,'' "hybridity," "mimicry" and "ambivalence" challenge the idea of an all-powerful Western cultural domination and show to what extent the subalterns resist, modify and articulate this "incomer" colonial cultural threat.

9. Not reproducing the same violence as the West

In *We Must Get Out of the Great Night: Essay on Decolonized Africa* (*Sortir de la grande nuit*, 2010), the Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe underlines the performative role of Postcolonial theory. According to him, postcolonialism provides perspectives that pave the way for open and peaceful intersubjective relations in the society, released from destructive dialectics between the colonizer and the colonized. Postcolonial theory, therefore, aims to serve the whole of humanity and not only colonized and non-Western people.

As Frantz Fanon articulates it in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, "all forms of exploitation resemble one another" (1956: 65), and all of them violate the spiritual, moral and bodily integrity of the human being. As a result, since postcolonial perspectives are freeing non-Western people from colonial oppression, they can also be applied to any other kind of oppression.

This is also what Aimée Césaire (1913-2008) inferred when he traced back Nazism's genealogy to slavery, apartheid regimes and colonialism. For him, the sources of oppressive ideologies are identical worldwide, as are the solutions.

> "When I turn on my radio, when I hear that Negroes have been lynched in America, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; when I turn on my radio, when I learn that Jews have been insulted, mistreated, persecuted, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; when, finally, I turn on my radio and hear that in Africa forced labor has been inaugurated and legalized, I say that we have certainly been lied to: Hitler is not dead."
>
> (Aimée Césaire, "Political Speech of the Election Campaign of 1945," as quoted in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952: 66)

These kinds of approaches are very much needed in Western societies too, as the colonial experience leads to the barbarization of the colonizer himself. European authors such as Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), Ramon J. Sender (1901-1982) or Knud Holmboe (1902-1931) described in their books how the inconceivable use of violence pushes the European colonizer into psychological sickness and madness.

> "I've seen the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire; but, by all the stars! These were strong, lusty, red-eyed devils, that swayed and drove men—men, I tell you. But as I stood on this hillside, I foresaw that in the blinding sunshine of that land I would become acquainted with a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly. How insidious he could be, too, I was only to find out several months later and a thousand miles farther." (Conrad, The Heart of Darkness, 1899: 18)

10. Postcolonial studies in Western contexts

Postcolonial studies also take place in contemporary Western contexts where the previously colonized and colonizer live side-by-side in multicultural societies. In *After the Empire, Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004), Paul Gilroy questions the racial and colonial tensions that, he claims, are still lying behind European societies today. The current debates on immigration, "cultural insecurity" and "Islamization" are all reminiscent of a colonial outlook that imposes essentialist categories upon the society, such as the differentiation between European descent and non-European origin, integrated and non-integrated, "we" and "them," superior and inferior, etc. In other words, the colonial question is still haunting the West from within. Gilroy even asserts that a kind of nostalgia for the colonial past is rising in European societies. This past is seen as a lost greatness where European states were powerful, with national identities fixed and European ways-of-life and values uncontested. The emergence of the "war on terror" in the 2000s supported this supremacist outlook and "made multiculturalism an aspect of the clash of integral and incompatible civilizations" (Gilroy, 2004: 2).

11. More Radical Positions in Postcolonial Studies

The debate on "double consciousness" and on the interactions between the colonizer and the colonized also leads to more radical positions. In other words, the normative stance that advocates for going beyond the dialectics between the colonizers and the colonized is not shared by all. In *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (2013), Wael B. Hallaq argues that the Islamic *Shari'ah* law, as it has been applied until the 19th century, is intrinsically incompatible with the modern state. Here, Hallaq underlines the fact that the encounter between Western and Islamic worldviews may not produce an alternative outlook that goes beyond conflicts but, on the contrary, may only subordinate the second to the profit of the first (Hallaq, 2013: xiii).

Recep Şentürk takes a balancing view while discussing the ambiguities of being "in-between" in his article "Intellectual Dependency, Late Ottoman Intellectuals between *Fiqh* and Social Science" (2007). Şentürk shows how late Ottoman scholars such as Ahmet Cevdet Pasha (1822-1895) and Ziya

Gökalp (1876-1924) tried to reconcile both Islamic *fiqh* and secular social sciences in their analysis of the society.

Can you compare the following quotations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.? To what extent are these quotations related to the post-colonial debate you just read above? On what points do these quotations differ? On what points do they agree?

"A revolutionary wants land so he can set up his own nation, an independent nation. These Negroes aren't asking for any nation—they're trying to crawl back on the plantation… If you're afraid of black nationalism, you're afraid of revolution. And if you love revolution, you love black nationalism." (Malcolm X, "Message to the Grass Roots," 1963: 9–10).

"Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust all White people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom." (Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream," 1963: 3).

Key Words

orientalism:	Edward Said claimed that the Orient was produced and managed by European countries in a way that reflected their political, social, economic, military, ideological, and scientific power. Orientalism, therefore, places the West in a position of superiority over the Orient.
the subaltern:	Shakravorty Spivak employed the concept of the subaltern to describe the situation of Third World women. She argues that any attempt by Western scholars to represent or articulate subaltern experience is problematic because it runs the risk of speaking on behalf of the people being studied.

ambivalence and hybridity:	Homi Bhabha argued that viewing colonialism in terms of binaries (black–white; Western–Eastern) is simplistic and naïve. Cultures and identities are characterized by in-between moments, hybridity, ambivalence, and uncertainty. For Bhabha, hybridity is politically produced in the process of colonialism. It occupies an ambivalent space between the colonial power and its subjects.

Summary

- In the postcolonial period, intellectuals from colonized countries started to question the Western epistemological and academic hegemony. These critical efforts gave rise to a body of knowledge called as Postcolonial theory.
- Postcolonial theory is a critical body of knowledge that:
    - Question the dominant ways through which the world is known
    - Challenge and critique the dynamics of knowledge creation
    - Argue for an ontological deconstruction of mainstream knowledge formations.
- Colonial powers used knowledge and science to justify colonialism and fabricated inferior images of the colonized.
- Western social sciences, especially positivism, are instruments of intellectual hegemony of the West.
- Social science is neither value-free nor universal.
- The world has long been viewed through the one-sided ethnocentric and Euro-centric lens of the colonizer.
- Mainstream knowledge have failed to acknowledge the existence of a plurality of perspectives.
- It sees the world in terms of binaries/dichotomies (black–white; Western–Eastern; civilized-uncivilized)
- White man's burden to 'civilize' required an understanding of the 'other uncivilized' world.

- Postcolonial theorists criticize the following argument: "West is ordered, rational, masculine, good, while the orient is chaotic, irrational, feminine, evil."
- There are three most important postcolonial theorists:
  (1) Edward Said
  (2) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
  (3) Homi K. Bhabha
- Edward Said claimed that Orient was produced by European countries in a way that reflected their political, social, economic, military, ideological, and scientific power.
- Spivak employed the concept of the subaltern to describe the situation of Third World women. She criticizes Western scholars claiming to represent or articulate subaltern experience for they speak on behalf of the people being studied, which is problematic.
- Homi Bhabha argued that there are in-between moments of cultures and identities such as hybridity and ambivalence. He criticizes the binary conception of colonialism like black–white and Western–Eastern.
- Limitations:
    - The postcolonial literature is abstract and poorly integrated.
    - Postcolonialism is incapable of synthesizing any comprehensive and unified theory examining social systems in terms of its colonialist or postcolonialist practices.
    - It uses the same ontology, epistemology and methodology as the theories it criticizes.
    - Postcolonial theory criticizes existing theories about the social world but have yet to produce an alternative to them.

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MODULE 5

MODULE

5

CHAPTER 10
Idealism and Interpretive Approaches

CHAPTER 11
Hermeneutics

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you will be able to:

- explain what are the ontological, epistemological, and methodological bases of Idealism
- know what is social constructionism, how constructionists define human beings, their language and society.
- explain how modern hermeneutics has developed and how this discipline approaches human beings and their discourses
- compare and contrast idealism with critical theory and positivism critically analyze the limitations of Idealism and discuss the possibilities of overcoming them.

Chapter Ten

IDEALISM AND INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES

Focus Questions

- ◊ Do the forms of social life resemble those found in nature?
- ◊ Should social actors be treated as equivalent to physical objects?
- ◊ What is the most appropriate strategy for learning about society?
- ◊ Should the methods of the natural sciences be used to discover the laws that govern the operation of social systems?
- ◊ Is the researcher a detached and objective observer of social life, or must you enter into conversation with all subjects in order to understand the language they speak and the acts they perform?

You have already briefly studied idealism with respect to its ontology, epistemology and methodology in the earlier chapters of the textbook. In this chapter you will be exposed to a slightly more detailed account of idealism and its implementation in social research. This chapter will cover the interpretive approach as a subbranch of idealism. In this textbook we approach idealism as an umbrella school that gathers all the interpretative approaches that give priority to meaning, language and discourse. Due to our analytical and pedagogical purposes we place a spectrum of post structuralist thinkers like Derrida, Foucault, Gadamer to social constructivists like Alexander Wendt, and Vivien Burr to their precursor like Weber, Schleiermacher, Dilhey, Heidegger under this larger umbrella of idealism. In our view, schools of thought such as phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and hermeneutics can also be placed under idealism.

In the field of social research, idealism developed into a number of different schools including phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, although our focus here will be on its two research traditions of social constructionism and hermeneutics. Some of the key questions that we will address are:

- Do the forms of social life resemble those found in nature?
- Should social actors be treated as equivalent to physical objects?
- What is the most appropriate strategy for learning about society?
- Should the methods of the natural sciences be used to discover the laws that govern the operation of social systems?
- Is the researcher a detached and objective observer of social life, or must you enter into conversation with all subjects in order to understand the language they speak and the acts they perform?

This chapter will not cover the philosophical nuances of idealism and instead will focus on its significance as an interpretive approach within the social sciences. While there are various forms of "idealism," broadly-speaking, idealism began as a matter of philosophical speculation primarily in areas dealing with metaphysics, epistemology, and morality. It was only with the emergence of the positivist social sciences in the modern era during the eighteenth-century and its burgeoning into a distinct discipline a century later that idealist interpretations were being advanced in new ways by social scientists in contradistinction with positivist approaches. But before we delve into the subject matter, we will first need to get a better idea about what we mean by idealism.

1. What is Idealism?

Idealism is defined by two specific philosophical conceptualizations of reality, which is called ontological idealism, and of knowledge, which is referred to as epistemological idealism. Ontological idealism assumes that external reality does not exist outside of the human mind. The mind ultimately constructs reality, in all its varying forms, and at the very foundation of reality as a whole is some mental existence whether it be the mind, reason or will. Epistemological idealism holds that although things in the real world may exist independent of the mind, it is the mind that possesses the exclusive capacity to know, and that by performing certain mental activities it alone can give meaning to what is ‘real’.

2. Idealist Ontology

You have seen above that an idealist ontology distinguishes between two forms of existence: the natural world and the social world. Nature and society are markedly different in terms of their most basic qualities according to idealists. The social world is contingent on human recognition and is, therefore, unlike the natural world whose existence is independent of humans. Society exists only because people define it as real and choose to orient themselves towards it thusly.

Since we are dealing with interpretive approaches, let us now consider how an idealist ontology is applied in social research. Humans in an idealist ontology are defined as free and purposeful beings who as social actors create and recreate their own reality. Meanings, which are understood to be inherent in social acts, are essentially what makes up the subject matter of an idealist ontology in social research.

3. Idealist Epistemology

Most central to an idealist epistemology are the intentions and actions of social actors. The relation between intention and action based on practical inference is a relation between ideas rather than a relation between objects, such that holding one to be true or binding entails holding the other to be true or binding. In nature, there are connections between events which can be conceptualized as causation, but in the world of human society and culture, there are connections between intentions, motives, meanings and assumptions about what is and what should be. Action is caused by “an agent’s reflexive monitoring of his intentions in relation both to his wants and his appreciation of the demands of the outer world” (Wilson, 2010). In other words, there is no way of correctly describing action without identifying the underlying pattern of meaning in terms of which it “makes sense.” Weber explains the role of meaning relative to the observer’s intentions as follows:

Every artifact, such as for example a machine, can be understood only in terms of the meaning which its production and use have had or were intended to have; a meaning which may derive from a relation to exceedingly various purposes. Without reference to this meaning such an object remains wholly unintelligible. That which is intelligible or understandable about it is thus its relation to human action in the role either of means or of end; a relation of which the actor or actors can be said to have been aware and to which their action has been oriented (Weber 1968:7).

The social phenomenon becomes intelligible to us only through the meaning we attach to it. They are shaped by the intentions of the actors. This basic stance renders the subjective experiences of the actors as the object of social research. The scientific endeavour according to idealists necessarily entails interpretation.

4. Idealist Methodology

A social scientist attempts to understand the intention of actors and the meaning they attach to their actions. The German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) refers to this specific kind of 'understanding' as *verstehen*. For Weber, idealist sociology is "hermeneutical," which is to say that its main concern is to "make sense" of social life in much the same way a scholar reads a text. In contrast to the physical sciences where skepticism about a theory might prompt a search for more *facts*, the rejection of an interpretation in the social sciences can only be countered by an appeal to *understanding* on the part of the skeptic. In other words, in the natural sciences theories are verified or refuted based on factual evidence, whereas in idealist social sciences interpretations are accepted or countered by way of understanding (esp. in the Weberian-sense of *verstehen*). In this school, unlike positivists who treat a researcher's subjectivity as an error factor, according to interpretivist findings the research results from an interaction between the inquirer and the inquired. Understanding is the basic motivation behind social research. Basically, researchers contemplate on their own thoughts about the phenomenon that they observe, and this contemplative and empirical activity may result in new ideas and new perspectives about our own social existence.

Verstehen is used as a method of interpreting social interaction which involves putting oneself in the place of another.

5. Conception of Reality According to Idealism

Widely employed in social research, idealism values the human mind above and beyond all other faculties. One may ask, do we as humans have any other faculty to grasp our own existence other than the mind? Idealism is based on a philosophical outlook of the world which fundamentally holds that all or anything in the external world can be said to truly exist and moreover directly experienced by virtue of the mind alone. The idealist approach, which emphasizes the individual's own interpretive faculty, argues that reality gets its shape from the subject who experiences it. Reality is only accessible to subjects by whom meanings are assigned. Unlike positivists who claim that objective reality is outside of the individual and further claim to foresee based on a critical approach the mediation of social and historical structures in constituting reality; idealists claim that reality is what individuals make of it through their mental activities.

According to constructivists, who adopt an idealist approach, "rather than fully constituted experiencing subject to whom experiences happen, experience is the site of subject formation" (Scott 1997: 37). "Experience is at once always already an interpretation and is in need of interpretation," hence our focus here is bound to be on language as constructing rather than describing reality. "Experience is not something which language reflects. In so far as it is meaningful, experience is constituted in language" (Weedon 1996: 81).

6. Social Constructionism

Here you will learn briefly about one of the highly influential branches of interpretive approaches today: social constructionism. The basic idea behind social constructionism is that people as a collective are the ones that construct social reality, where social facts are believed to not necessarily exist in themselves but that they have an external, intrinsic, and objective reality. Social constructionists fundamentally argue that social reality is mediated through the mind and does not exist by itself.

Questions that we will deal with in this chapter are:

- Why is language so important for social constructionists?
- What led social constructionists to take on a critical stance towards

taken-for-granted knowledge?

- How did social constructionism develop?
- Social constructionism emerged as an intellectual movement in North America and Europe during the 1980s. And although its origins can in some ways be traced back earlier to the beginning of the twentieth-century, it was particularly against the backdrop of postmodernism that social constructionism had developed. Social constructionists agree with post structuralists on many issues as both assume the existence of a plurality of truths and that there are different interpretations and versions of truth for which all are upheld as being valid in their own specific context. The truth also varies according to the interpreter. This was in stark contrast to some of the Enlightenment thinkers' ideas regarding modernity which was premised on the contention that ultimate truth existed and could be discovered through rational means. Sociology and psychology are two fields from which social constructionism developed, and although these two particular fields aided in its development, social constructionism contrarily rejects essentialist and realist interpretations.
- Language is one of the key things that constructionists aim to understand. Language provides one of the basic building blocks of human thought and its social existence. Human interaction in combination with the use of language is what social constructionists essentially believe to be how knowledge is produced and that by strictly observing these two factors interpretations of social phenomena can be made. Vivien Burr explains this as follows:
- If our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it, is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is, where does it come from? The social constructionist answer is that people construct it between them. It is through the daily interruptions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Therefore, social interaction of all kinds, and particularly language, is one great interest to social constructionists. The goins-on between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed. […] What we regard as truth, which of course varies historically and cross-culturally, may be

> thought of as our current accepted ways of understanding the world. These are a product not of objective observations of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other. (Burr 2003: 4-5)

6.1. What are the ontological and epistemological assumptions of social constructionism?

Mental existence lays at the ontological basis of social constructionism. There is a misconception that social constructionists deny the existence of the external world (although some radical constructionists or sophists in ancient Greek philosophy would argue in this way). According to the wider community of constructionists, the external world exists independently of humans, although they insist that humans are unable to grasp it objectively. Individuals can have a sense of the objective world only in relation to a particular time and place where s/he is situated. The world is always mediated by the individual's mental faculties and subjective experience. Constructionists have conceded to a distinction between the objective realm of things and the symbolic realm of human discourse. Knowledge of the objective realm of things can never in themselves be attained according to social constructionists even if things in the outside world are granted an objective form of existence independent of human beings. They become meaningful only in relation to us. Objects in the world have an ontological status insofar that they serve as a basis of thought, and an epistemological status when we give meaning to them. Philips and Jorgensen give the example of a flood alongside our different conceptions of it. This vivid example illustrates how we construct the world around us through our different imaginations:

Let us take as an example a flood associated with a river overflowing its banks. The rise in the water level that leads to the flood is an event that takes place independently of people's thoughts and talk. Everybody drowns if they are in the wrong place, irrespective of what they think or say. The rise in the water level is a material fact. But as soon as people try to ascribe meaning to it, it is no longer outside discourse. Most would place it in the category of 'natural phenomena', but they would not necessarily describe it in the same way. Some would draw on a meteorological discourse, attributing the rise in the water level to an unusually heavy downpour. Others might account for it in terms of the El Niño phenomenon, or see it as one of the many global consequences of the 'greenhouse effect'. Still others would see it as the result of 'political mismanagement', such as the national government's failure to commission and fund the building of dykes. Finally, some might see it as a manifestation of God's will, attributing it to God's anger over a people's sinful way of life or seeing it as a sign of the arrival of Armageddon. The rise in the water level, as an event taking place at a particular point in time, can, then, be ascribed meaning in terms of many different perspectives or discourses (which can also be combined in different ways). Importantly, the different discourses each point to different courses of action as possible and appropriate such as the construction of dykes, the organisation of political opposition to global environmental policies or the national government, or preparation for the imminent Armageddon. Thus the ascription of meaning in discourses works to constitute and change the world (Philips & Jorgensen 2002: 9).

6.2. Language and Discourse in Social Constructionism

Language for social constructionists is what ultimately makes or constructs us as humans. Language is not a medium or a channel through which humans express themselves but it is what determines how we think and, more specifically, how we constitute the social world. It produces social identities and social relations. The change in social discourse parallels the changes in the social world. That is why social constructivist thinkers pay attention to struggles that take place in the discursive realm as they think the struggle works towards changing and, more importantly, reproducing social reality. In order to understand the role of language in the constitution of social reality, you need to understand what post structuralists mean by language. Post structuralists have modified structuralist conceptions by developing their own conception of language. The box below briefly discusses this change. In the context of the linguistic turn in the social sciences, which denotes the shift in the general approach of analyzing social phenomenon, scholars have started to take language more seriously conceiving it not just a channel or means to express ideas but a medium that constitutes social reality.

Ferdinand de Saussure

Structuralist and Poststructuralist Understanding of Language

The understanding of language as a system, which is not determined by the reality to which it refers, stems from the structuralist linguistics that followed in the wake of Ferdinand de Saussure's pioneering ideas around the beginning of this century. Saussure argued that signs consist of two sides, form (signifiant) and content (signifié), and that the relation between the two is *arbitrary* (Saussure 1960). The meaning we attach to words is not inherent in them but a result of social conventions whereby we connect certain meanings with certain sounds. The sound or the written image of the word 'dog', for example, has no natural connection to the image of a dog that appears in our head when we hear the word. That we understand what others mean when they say 'dog' is due to the social convention that has taught us that the word 'dog' refers to the four-legged animal that barks. Saussure's point is that the meaning of individual signs is determined by their relation to other signs: a sign gains its specific value from being different from other signs. The word 'dog' is different from the words 'cat' and 'mouse' and 'dig' and 'dot'. The word 'dog' is thus part of a network or *structure* of other words from which it differs; and it is precisely from everything that it is not that the word 'dog' gets its meaning.

Saussure saw this structure as a social institution and therefore as changeable over time. This implies that the relationship between language and reality is also arbitrary, a point developed in later structuralist and poststructuralist theory. The world does not itself dictate the words with which it should be described, and, for example, the sign 'dog' is not a natural consequence of a physical phenomenon. The form of the sign is different in different languages (for example, 'chien' and 'Hund'), and the content of the sign also changes on being applied in new situations (when, for example, saying to a person, 'you're such a dog').

Saussure advocated that the structure of signs be made the subject matter of linguistics. Saussure distinguished between two levels of language, *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is the structure of language, the network of signs that give meaning to one another, and it is fixed and unchangeable. *Parole*, on the other hand, is situated language use, the signs actually used by people in specific situations. *Parole* must always draw on *langue*, for it is the structure of language that makes specific statements possible. But in the Saussurian tradition *parole* is often seen as random and so vitiated by people's mistakes and idiosyncrasies as to disqualify it as an object of scientific research. Therefore, it is the fixed, underlying structure, *langue*, which has become the main object of linguistics.

Poststructuralism takes its starting point in structuralist theory but modifies it in important respects. Poststructuralism takes from structuralism the idea that signs derive their meanings not through their relations to reality but through internal relations within the network of signs; it rejects structuralism's view of language as a stable, unchangeable and totalising structure and it dissolves the sharp distinction between *langue* and *parole*.

First we turn to the poststructuralist critique of the stable, unchangeable structure of language. As we have mentioned, in Saussure's theory, signs acquire their meaning by their difference from other signs. In the Saussurian tradition, the structure of language can be thought of as a fishing-net in which each sign has its place as one of the knots in the net. When the net is stretched out, the knot is fixed in position by its distance from the other knots in the net, just as the sign is defined by its distance from the other signs. Much of structuralist theory rests on the assumption that signs are locked in particular relationships with one another: every sign has a particular location in the net and its meaning is fixed. Later structuralists and poststructuralists have criticised this conception of language; they do not believe that signs have such fixed positions as the metaphor of the fishing-net suggests. In poststructuralist theory, signs still acquire their meaning by being different from other signs, but those signs from which they differ can change according to the context in which they are used (see Laclau 1993a: 433). For instance, the word 'work' can, in certain situations, be the opposite of 'leisure' whereas, in other contexts, its opposite is 'passivity' (as in 'work in the garden'). It does not follow that words are open to all meanings – that would make language and communication impossible – but it does have the consequence that words cannot be fixed with one or more definitive meaning(s). The metaphor of the fishing-net is no longer apt since it cannot be ultimately determined where in the net the signs should be placed in relation to one another. Remaining with the metaphor of 'net', we prefer to use the internet as a model, whereby all links are connected with one another, but links can be removed and new ones constantly emerge and alter the structure.

Source: Philips, L., & Jorgensen, M. W. (2002). Discourse analysis as theory and method. 2009. p. 9-11.

6.3. Critical stance of social constructionism toward taken-for-granted knowledge

A social constructionist invites us to think critically about the world and this includes our selves. This is because all the ways of understanding have been till this very day bounded by history and culture, which makes it all relative.

We understand that the external world is rooted in observations. Nature does not simply reveal itself which is what a positivist and empiricist would have us believe. Likewise we should not uncritically concede to rules or predefined standards for doing something the 'correct' way. Therefore, classifications of 'classical' should be avoided at all costs. Below we will exemplify how an international relations scholar, Alexander Wendt, adopts the constructionist approach in his research.

6.4. Constructivism in International Relations Theory

Alexander Wendt is Professor of Political Science at The Ohio State University. He received his PhD in 1989 from the University of Minnesota, he taught at Yale University, Dartmouth College, and the University of Chicago.

Alexander Wendt (1992) reminds us that the current international state system was created by the Westphalian Treaty of 1648. Realists reified this historical process and purported the basic realist conceptions formulated by them as being characteristic of the international system. Following the main assumptions of the Westphalian order, realists defined states as unitary actors and assumed that they are the sole players in an anarchic environment. Anarchy means that there is no higher authority to regulate the state's behaviors. In this presumed realist construction, there is a constant struggle to attain power among nation states in such an international system. It is inevitable. In such a conception motivation to increase the state's own power is bound to be its sole interest. They are in what may be called a self-help situation. The realist conception follows the motto "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." This idea gives way to how states come to see others as friends and as enemies. Wendt argues the contrary by pointing out that the international system is historically and socially constructed. The patterns that seems to exist, the cause-and effect relationships, and even the nation states themselves are situated within the webs of meaning and practices that constitute them. Despite its historical constitution, the international state system is now taken for granted. Many today tend to take this historical contract as a part of natural reality and as something that is permanently fixed. They speculate that the international system has some essential characteristics that do not change. Wendt argues that we cannot mistake socially constructed institutions for permanent objects. It is possible to re-consider the international order in a more cooperative manner. “As ideas and practices vary over time or space, patterns that once looked solid and predictable may change as well” (Hurd 2008: 300). Wendt shows us therefore that it is quite possible to rethink the international system. In constructivist critical thinking, if a social institution is constructed in a certain way, it can be re-constructed again in a different way.

6.5. Discourse

The central concept here is the `text' (any printed, visual, oral or auditory production that is available for reading, viewing or hearing). Readers create texts as they interpret and interact with them. The meaning of a text is always indeterminate, open-ended and interactional. Its focus is upon the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge and the relationship between such knowledge and the possibilities for social action and power. Our ways of talking about and representing the world through speech, written texts, pictures and images all constitute the discourses through which we experience the world. The way that discourses construct our experience can be examined by `deconstructing' these texts, taking them apart and showing how they work to present us with a particular vision of the world, and thus enabling us to challenge it. Discourses make it possible for us to see the world in a certain way. They produce our knowledge of the world.

John F. Dryzek is one of the leading scholars in the study of discourse. In one of his highly influential studies, he approaches environmental issues from a discourse perspective. His account on discourse allows us to see how a concept is defined and applied in social research:

> Environmental problems tend to be interconnected and multidimensional, and, in a word, complex. Complexity refers to the number and variety of elements and interactions in the environment of a decision system. When human decision systems (be they individuals or collective bodies such as governments) confront environmental problems, they encounter two orders of complexity. Ecosystems are complex, and our knowledge of them is limited, as the scientists who study them are the first to admit. Human social systems are complex too, which is why there is

so much work for the ever-growing number of social scientists who study them. Environmental problems by definition are found at the intersection of ecosystems and human social systems, which make them doubly complex.

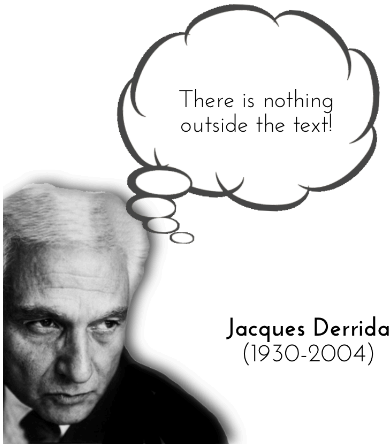
The more complex a situation, the larger the number of plausible perspectives upon it; this is because to prove any one of them wrong becomes more difficult. Thus the proliferation of perspectives on environmental problems that has accompanied the development and diversification of environmental concerns since the 1960s should come as no surprise. It is my intention here to make sense of this proliferation by looking at environmental discourses, which like any discourse contains "representations and systems of meaning" (Howarth, 2009: 311). This system gives context and sense to any particular use of words (Fairclough, 2003).

A discourse is a shared way of apprehending the world. Embedded in language, it enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts. Discourses construct meanings and relationships, helping define common sense and legitimate knowledge. Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgments, and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, agreements, and disagreements. If such shared terms did not exist, it would be hard to imagine problem-solving as we would have to continually return to first principles. So discourses both enable and constrain communication. Discourses coordinate the actions of large numbers of people and organizations who do not otherwise need to interact. This role is especially important where more formal sources of coordination are weak or absent-such as in global politics, where (as we will see in chapter 7) environmental affairs have been coordinated through the discourse of sustainable development. The way a discourse views the world is not always easily comprehended by those who subscribe to other discourses. However, as I will show, complete discontinuity across discourses is rare, such that interchange across discourse boundaries can occur, however difficult.

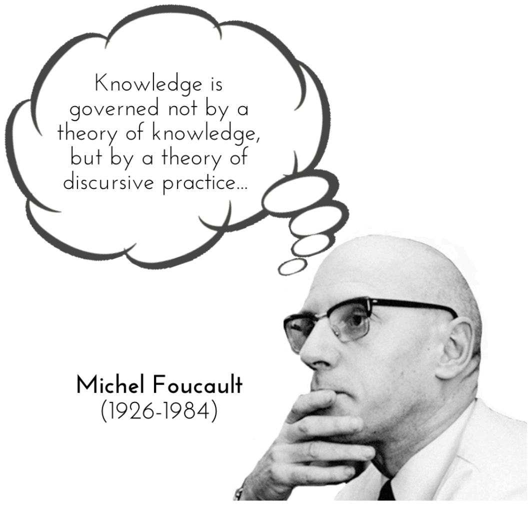
Discourses are bound up with political practices and power (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005: 175). Discourses can themselves embody power in the way they condition the perceptions and values of those subject to them, such that some interests are advanced, others suppressed, some people made more compliant and governable (Foucault, 1980). Discourses are also intertwined with some material political realities. Governments in capitalist economies have to perform a number of basic functions whether they want to or not (see Dryzek, 1992a): first and foremost, ensuring continued economic growth. Corporations can stop investing in response to government policies they do not like. The increasing mobility of capital and finance intensifies this pressure, because businesses can threaten to transfer operations to countries with less stringent environmental policies and practices. As China, long a haven for polluting manufactures, begins to take pollution seriously, it

> too feels this kind of pressure. If governments make investors unhappy-through (say) tough antipollution policy-then they are punished by disinvestment, which in turn means recession, unpopularity in the eyes of voters, and falling tax revenues. Often the reason investors take such actions is that they subscribe to a market-oriented globalization discourse that defines some government policies as right, others as wrong.
>
> (Dryzek, J. S. (2013). The politics of the earth: Environmental discourses. Oxford university press. pages 9 - 10.)

In a nutshell, social constructionism claims that language and discourse have a strong influence upon our perception of reality. What we know as reality is essentially a social construction which is made possible through and within the world of representations by means of discourse and language. Truth is not seen as some irrefutable state of affairs ultimately discoverable through the application of the scientific method, but rather it is a fluid and relative description of the world created through discourse. Reality becomes relative and multiple, dependent upon the historically and culturally situated perspective of the perceiver.


There is nothing outside the text!

Jacques Derrida
(1930-2004)


Knowledge is governed not by a theory of knowledge, but by a theory of discursive practice...

Michel Foucault
(1926-1984)

	POSITIVIST APPROACHES	INTERPRETIVIST APPROACHES
Overriding Goal	"explanation" via subsumption under general laws, prediction	"understanding"
Nature of Reality	objective, tangible, single, divisible	subjective, socially-constructed, contextual
Nature of Social Beings	deterministic, reactive	voluntaristic, proactive
Knowledge	time-free, context-independent	time-bound, context-dependent

Figure 10.1: A comparison between positivist and interpretivist approaches

Key Words

verstehen:	a German term associated with Max Weber meaning empathic understanding of human behaviour, or understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view. It implies an interpretive or participatory examination of social phenomena.
discourse:	refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, and statements that together produce a particular version of events.
deconstruction:	a form of philosophical and literary analysis to show how these texts work to present us with a particular vision of the world.
text:	anything that can be ‘read’ for meaning which is a manifestation of a discourse. No aspect of human life is without meaning (life as text).

Summary

- Idealism entails:
    - priority of the mind which is seen as the ultimate foundation for discerning and experiencing existence.
    - an ontology where existence is affirmed as being fundamentally dependent on the mind.
    - an epistemology grounded in the idea that what we call or give meaning to as ‘real’ is purely a construct of the mind.
- Idealism, when defined polemically in contradistinction to positivism, does not attempt to conflate society with nature, nor the social sciences with the natural sciences.
- Social constructionism rejects absolute forms of truth claims, whether it be of history, human nature, or reality.
- Social reality is jointly constructed by human beings through their interaction with one another; it is not 'out there' to be discovered.
- Social constructionism is against essentialism.
- It rejects the idea that social facts have external, intrinsic and objective reality independent of human beings.
- As a reflection of Postmodernism, it rejects both the idea that there can be an ultimate truth and the idea that the world is the result of hidden structures.
- It emphasizes discursive construction of reality (linguistic turn). Language plays a crucial role in the construction of social facts.
- A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, and statements that together produce a particular version of events. (Burr, 1995: 32)
- The central concept here is 'text' -anything that can be ‘read’ for meaning which is a manifestation of one or more discourses-. Because there is virtually no aspect of human life that is exempt from meaning, everything is 'textual'. Buildings may ‘speak’ of civic pride and clothes may suggest class position, status, gender, etc. (Burr, 1995: 32)

- The way that discourses construct our experience can be examined by 'deconstructing' these texts, taking them apart and showing how they work to present us with a particular vision of the world.
- Limitations:
    - It completely denies the existence of truth and objective reality which undermines social systems which require to be based on objectivity such as trade, law and morality.
    - It commits completely to "absolute relativism" which gives no room to universalism.
    - Undermines universal ethics and law.
    - It suffers from pseudo-dichotomies: universalism versus relativism; discourse versus reality; author versus reader.

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Chapter Eleven
HERMENEUTICS

Focus Questions

- ◊ What is hermeneutics?
- ◊ Who are is major representatives?
- ◊ What are their claims?
- ◊ In which areas do they oppose positivist approach?
- ◊ Can human action be seen as a text?
- ◊ What are the limitations of hermeneutics?

> Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man.
> *Martin Heidegger, Language, Language, Though, 1971.*

> *Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins* - Language is the house of being. In its home human beings dwell. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home.
> *Martin Heidegger, Letter on "Humanism".*

As you have already learned in the previous chapters, idealism gives priority to the mind. Our interpretive faculty is what we use to attain knowledge regarding our social and physical existence in the world. This, however, creates a challenge. If the mind is central and if everything else is intelligible only through its intermediation, then how can we study the outside world? If all categories that are related to either the physical or social world are constructs of our minds, then how can we assign things that stand outside of our minds a status of reality? As students of the social sciences, are we studying only the representations of the world in our own minds. If that is the case, then how can we talk about social research? If we were to accept this reality, what kind of epistemological, ontological and methodological position would we need to adopt? It is important to keep in mind that idealist philosophers have all tried to resolve this issue in different ways.

In this section we will delve into the subject of hermeneutics which represents a major interpretive current in the Western intellectual tradition.

1. Introduction

Suppose you encounter a written document that you are unfamiliar with. What are some tools that you would find yourself utilizing to better understand this text? One of the first things you would likely do is to ensure that you understand the words and expressions correctly. You would look up in a dictionary phrases that you are not acquainted with. You would also try to comprehend whether there is anything metaphorical or figurative in the text. If the text is from an earlier time period, you may also need to cross check if the meaning of the words have witnessed any change.

If you truly want to understand the actual meaning of the text, you would surely go beyond the text itself: what does the author actually intend with this text? At what stage of his or her life did the author write this text? What or who were the main sources of influence? You will further examine where the text stands in relation to the author's thought as a whole and also what sort of meanings the author ascribes to this text. You will have to study the context in which the author lived. We can further extend this list of tools of understanding, but for our purpose it would suffice us to acknowledge that your understanding of the written document will have been improved after employing these tools. In other words, you would gain a better understanding of the text when compared to your initial encounter with it.

Is it possible to study human action in a similar manner? Can we consider actions of individuals as meaningful texts produced by them and those individuals as the authors? Can interpretive tools which are used for texts help us to understand human action? The hermeneutical school in the social sciences believes this to be possible affirming that interpretive tools specifically developed to understand texts can also be applied in the social sciences to understand human action.

Hermeneutics as a methodology of interpretation is represented by people who advocate this current in the West. It should therefore not be assumed from the discussions hereafter that hermeneutics is how interpretation is carried out outside of the West. In section B of this chapter, you will learn how interpretation is conducted in the Islamic tradition.

The following extract on the origin of the term hermeneutics will provide you with some background before moving on to learn more about hermeneutics in depth.

Where does the term *hermeneutics* come from?

"The word 'hermeneutics' comes from the ancient Greek language (*hermeneuein* = to utter, to explain, to translate), and was first used by thinkers who discussed how divine messages or mental ideas are expressed in human language. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato (427–347 bce), for example, used the word *hermeneutics* in dealing with poets as 'hermeneuts of the divine', and his student Aristotle (384–322 bce) wrote the first extant treatise on hermeneutics, in which he showed how spoken and written words were expressions of inner thoughts. Thus, from its very first appearance, the term *hermeneuein*, along with its later Latin equivalent 'interpretari', was associated with the task of understanding some kind of spoken or written communication.

The word *hermeneutics* has also been associated with the winged-messenger god, Hermes... In Greek mythology, Hermes relays divine tidings to mortals. While there is little evidence for the still popular etymology that the word *hermeneutics* derives from Hermes, he nevertheless provides a useful emblem for our definition of hermeneutics. Interpretation does involve the deciphering of unclear messages. It is essentially an act of mediation, or translation, and Hermes, who was also described as an eloquent speaker and cunning trickster, represents the need for translation of difficult communications. Hermes reminds us that interpretation involves both grasping what someone has said (receiving a message) and making oneself understood (sending a message)… The divine figure of Hermes suggests that interpretation is driven by our desire to grasp the existential import of what we are trying to understand. As the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), an important figure for modern hermeneutics, put it, 'Hermes is the messenger of the gods. He brings the message of fate.' For Heidegger, hermeneutics was the kind of interpretation that listened for an important message or announcement of crucial importance. Heidegger's point is that interpretation is motivated by our personal interest and concern. Whether I read the Bible, an employment contract, or try to understand why my friend has not visited me in weeks, I want to know my 'fate', that is, what these texts and actions mean to me. Interpretation, in other words, is intrinsically guided by my present concerns, by the desire to hear an announcement that pertains to my own situation" (Zimmermann 2015: 2-5).

The conceptual journey of hermeneutics passed through several stages in the Western intellectual tradition before it began to be regarded as an alternative to positivist social theory. In fact, the application of hermeneutics into the social sciences is a relatively recent phenomenon that started in mid 1900s. But long before that, in the 18th century 'hermeneutics' was employed only in the interpretation of texts, and more precisely religious texts (Outhwaite 1987). This association of hermeneutics with Biblical interpretations still continues its relevance. If you check the entry on hermeneutics in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, you will find that it is restrictedly defined as an interpretive tool for the Bible: "*Hermeneutics... [is] the study of the general principles of biblical interpretation. ... the primary purpose of hermeneutics, and of the exegetical methods employed in interpretation, has been to discover the truths and values of the Bible*"

Before the sixteenth century, hermeneutics was a subdiscipline of philology and its primary concern was to recover the true meaning of the essential texts of Christianity. Primary texts of Christianity were available in contradictory versions and therefore there was a need to differentiate "true versions" of these texts from the "distorted" ones. Originally developed to grapple with this problem, doing hermeneutics meant to scrutinize contending versions of a text by employing mainly philological tools. At this stage of development, the aim of hermeneutics to recover "the true meaning" was indistinguishable from establishing the authenticity of a text (Bauman 1978: 7).

Hermeneutics started to occupy a more central place in the Western intellectual tradition starting from the 16th century with the emergence of the Catholic-Protestant debate revolving around the authentic text and interpretation of the Bible. Protestant theologians were particularly associated with Hermeneutics with their reformist theological project which claimed that every individual was capable of reading and interpreting the text (Brewer 2011).

The extension of the domain of hermeneutics is usually attributed to the German Protestant theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). He believed that hermeneutics should not be exclusively used in the interpretation of the Bible and the Classics. Rather, according to him, any form of speaking or writing that requires understanding involved hermeneutics. Schleiermacher’s contribution marked the beginning of Modern hermeneutics which is interested in any form of written or spoken discourse. He defined hermeneutics broadly as the *art of understanding another person's utterance correctly* in general, and written discourse in particular.

Schleiermacher uses the term “art” for hermeneutics on a purpose as he belie-ved the hermeneutical interpre-tation cannot be mechanized. It rather had to be seen as an activity of an art which does not possess strictly defined rules (Schleiermacher and Bowie 1998: 11).

> “Hermeneutics is the art of understanding another person’s utterance correctly”
>
> *Schleiermacher*

According to Schleiermacher, every utterance has two dimensions: one is its relationship to the totality of language and the other is its relationship to the totality of the author’s thought. A sound understanding of utterance has to consider both dimensions. Schleiermacher comes up with two conceptions of hermeneutics to address both aspects of utterance: Grammatical and psychological hermeneutics.

Grammatical hermeneutics refers to the understanding of language itself. It entails the study of the generally known meanings of the words within the text or speech according to the rules of the language. Psychological interpretation, on the other hand, aims to unveil the intention of the author by putting oneself in the author's mind, and by examining the author’s context, personal life and his thought in total. Understanding the history and inner life of the author is vital to psychological hermeneutics (Blaikie 2004) (Marin⍰a 2005) (Vedder 2017).

Schleiermacher sees grammatical and psychological hermeneutics equally important and one should not view *grammatical interpretation* the lower and *psychological interpretation* the higher, or vice versa. If one tries to understand an utterance as an act of its author’s mind, this is possible only by understanding its grammatical dimension as language modifies the mind of authors. Similarly, if one tries to understand a text or speech solely as a modification of the mind, then it becomes impossible to understand it. For language is neither merely a means for an author to communicate his or her thoughts, nor is it the absolute determinant that shapes the thoughts and ideas of all individuals. Therefore, a successful practice of the art of understanding, hermeneutics, depends not only on the talent for language but also on the “the talent for knowledge of individual people.”

Schleiermacher’s Two Moments of Understanding

“As every utterance has a dual relationship to the totality of language and to the whole of its originator, then all understanding consists also of the two moments, of understanding as derived from language, and as a fact in the thinker...

...Understanding is only a being-in-one-another of these two moments (of the grammatical and psychological).

1 The utterance is not even understood as an act of the mind if it is not understood as a linguistic designation, because the innateness of language modifies the mind.

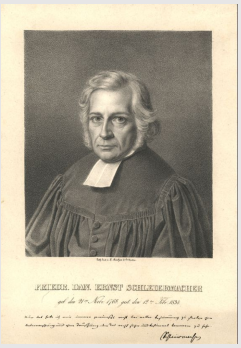
2 The utterance is also not understood as a modification of language if it is not also understood as an act of the mind, because the ground of all influence of the individual lies in the mind, which itself develops by utterance.”

(Schleiermacher and Bowie 1998 :8-9)

Schleiermacher's notion of hermeneutics paved the way for new opportunities. From being a discipline with a narrow area of concern (interpretation of religious and classical literary texts from the past) within the confines of philology, biblical exegesis and art criticism, it became a tool of understanding different cultures, historical periods and experiences of people (Blaikie 2004) (Bauman 1978).

Schleiermacher: Founder of Modern Hermeneutics

Schleiermacher was born into a family known for their devotion to the Moravian branch of Protestant Christianity in 1768. His father was an army chaplain. Schleiermacher finished his early schooling in a Moravian boarding school and later joined the University of Halle. He passed his theological examination in 1790 and worked as a private tutor and then as a pastor.


FRIEDR. DAN. ERNST SCHLEIERMACHER
geb. den 21ten Novbr. 1768 gest. den 12ten Febr. 1834

He also worked as a hospital chaplain and university preacher in Halle. He also played an important role in the establishment of the University of Berlin as a secretary to the founding commission and later worked there as a professor of theology and the dean of the theological faculty from 1810-1834. During that period he also was a preacher at the Holy Trinity Church in Berlin.

Scheirmacher is considered to be the founder of modern hermeneutics. His major works include *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers and The Christian Faith*. He translated Plato's works into german. These translations completely changed the course of studies on Plato and they are still widely used and respected today, two centuries after their translation.

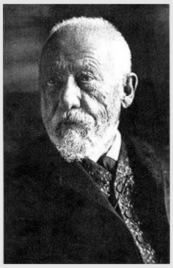
Besides being regarded as the founder of modern hermeneutics, he is also known as "the father of modern theology.'' Due to his influence and innovative ideas he is recognized as one of the most prominent theologians in the history of Christianity and is compared to other major theologians such as Augustin, Aquinas and Calvin.

His *Hermeneutics and Criticism* is usually seen as the founding text of modern hermeneutics and was published after his death posthumously in 1838 (Schleiermacher and Bowie 1998) (Marin▯a 2005).

Subsequent to Schleiermacher, modern hermeneutics was further developed by other prominent thinkers like Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) and Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005).

The German philosopher Dilthey attempted to develop a universal and objective method for interpreting texts. His belief in objectivity was criticized later by the representatives of the hermeneutical school who came after him and accepted more subjective positions. In Dilthey's view, an interpreter has two primary tasks: first is to reconstruct the social and historical circumstances in which a text was produced and then to locate that text within these circumstances. The purpose of Dilthey's hermeneutical approach was not to comprehend the authors as they understood themselves. Rather, an interpreter had the potential to understand the writers deeper than they themselves did. This was thanks to retrospection (historical distance) which placed a researcher to an advantaged position that permitted a better understanding of the relationship between the author of the text and his or her historical circumstance (Howell 2013).

Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften*
Human Sciences (Sciences of Spirit)



"The nature of knowledge in the human sciences must be explicated by observing the full course of human development. **Such a method stands in contrast to that recently applied all too often by the so-called positivists**, who derive the meaning of the concept of science from a definition of knowledge which arises from a predominant concern with the natural sciences. On the basis of that concept, they determine which intellectual occupations merit the name and status of science" (Dilthey, Introduction to the Human Sciences, p. 57)

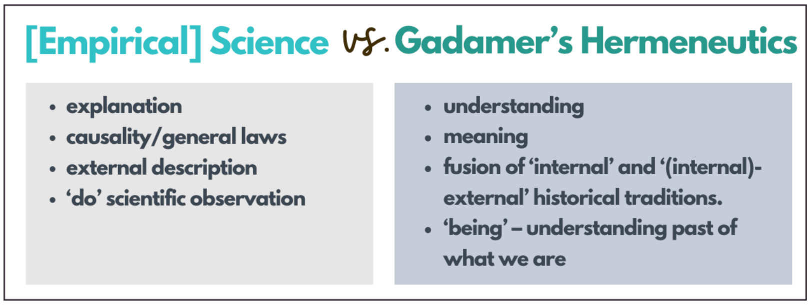
Another famous figure in the school of hermeneutics is Martin Heidegger. Heidegger who was influenced by Dilthey was interested in developing a method to understand human experience. In the center of Heidegger's thought lay the idea that understanding is a problem of ontology, not epistemology. Understanding was not about "knowing", it was rather about "being". For Heidegger, there is no understanding outside one's historical and social context. As human beings, we are unable to step outside the context we live in. Understanding meant to make our experiences which are ingrained in our social relationships explicit. In Heidegger's view, understanding is fundamental to human existence and, thus, it is universal and the duty of ordinary people (Blaikie 2004). Understanding constitutes a fundamental way for human beings to participate in the world (Outhwaite 1987). Heidegger also departs from Schleiermacher and Dilthey on the idea of prejudice. Both authors saw prejudices as an obstacle for understanding and, therefore, an interpreter is supposed to liberate himself or herself from their socio-historical context. Heidegger disagreed with this position since for him there is no understanding outside one's socio-historical context (Blaikie 2004).

Heidegger places *understanding* at the center of human life and argues that we are "understanding entities" in the first place. For him, as self-interpreting beings, understanding is not only a crucial aspect of our existence, but it is our very existence: "we humans can understand because our existence is as understanding beings." Heidegger, in the later part of his career, concentrated on the essentiality of language in understanding and claimed that "human beings do not speak, but rather, language speaks us" (Sherratt 2006: 80).

Another prominent representative of the school of hermeneutics in the 20th century is Gadamer. He was interested in the nature of understanding, which involved questions such as: what is understanding? how is understanding possible? what type of knowledge does understanding produce and what is its status? For Gadamer, *understanding* means grasping the "historical tradition" - which refers to a particular time and place in which a text (or human act) is produced. To achieve this, one has to get into a dialogue with the text allowing the text to speak to him or her. To discover the *tradition,* an interpreter may also need to consult sources other than the text itself (Blaikie 2004).

Two key concepts used by Gadamer are "horizon" and "fusion of horizons". Gadamer employs the concept of horizon in explaining the situation of an interpreter because it is not something limited but can in fact be broadened.

The interpreter’s horizon of meaning can be extended by means of a fusion with the horizon of the text or act by engaging it through dialogue (hermeneutical conversation). The process of understanding then involves a collision of horizons that alter the horizon of the interpreter and the text. The purpose of understanding is not to discover the true meaning of the text with an open mind, rather it is to bridge the gap between one’s familiar world and the foreign one (Gadamer 2004) (Blaikie 2004).



[Empirical] Science vs. Gadamer’s Hermeneutics

- explanation
- causality/general laws
- external description
- ‘do’ scientific observation

- understanding
- meaning
- fusion of ‘internal’ and ‘(internal)-external’ historical traditions.
- ‘being’ – understanding past of what we are

Figure 11.1: A General comparison of Gadamer’s hermeneutics with empirical scientific approaches to the study of the humanities. (Source: (Sherratt 2006: 95).

Gadamer: Fusion of Horizons
(An extract from Gadamer’s Truth and Method)

Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of "horizon." **The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point**. Applying this to the thinking mind, we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth...the word has been used in philosophy to characterize the way in which thought is tied to its finite determinacy, and the way one's range of vision is gradually expanded. A person who has no horizon does not see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest to him. On the other hand, "to have a horizon" means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it. A person who has [a] horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small. Similarly, working out the

> hermeneutical situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition.
>
> In fact the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. Rather, **understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves.** We are familiar with the power of this kind of fusion chiefly from earlier times and their naivete about themselves and their heritage. In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new are always combining into something of living value, without either being explicitly foregrounded from the other (Gadamer 2004: 301, 305).

2. Human Action as Meaningful Text

Today, hermeneutics is not only concerned with the interpretation of biblical and literary texts. It has spread into other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, political science, and management studies. What unites hermeneutical approaches is their opposition to the instrumental and manipulative tendencies of positivist social science and its attempt to overlook the differences between the social and natural worlds (Benton and Craib 2001). The hermeneutic approach in the social sciences is primarily interested in the meaning we attach to the world and how we communicate them with others. In order to perceive why human beings act as they do, one has to understand the meaning of their activity (Giddens 1982). Methodologically, it tries to answer how to best understand "human (symbolic) expressions within a particular field of meaning" (Gjesdal, 2019). It aims to uncover meaning and motivations in human action that are not directly observable (Benton and Craib 2001).

As you have studied earlier, positivism assumes that the situations in which the natural and social sciences operate do not significantly differ from one another. And, positivists defend this position in two main ways:

a) The differences that exist in the social world are not accessible through observation. Since science is only interested in observable dimensions of social action, these differences (e.g. meanings, will, motivations, intentions, and similar internal experiences) do not concern scientific inquiry and therefore cannot be given a scientific treatment. Poetry or philosophy can deal with these dimensions of human action.

b) These differences do not matter. As we can fully reduce them to external indicators, they do not constitute any methodological challenge for a scientific study (Bauman 1978).

Interpretive Social Science: An Anti-Naturalist Approach

"...[A]anyone who really desires to understand and explain human agency must adopt a "hermeneutic" or interpretive philosophical perspective… Hermeneutics is non-optional. Anyone from a social scientist to a layperson who truly wishes to grasp human behavior needs hermeneutics. This is because hermeneutics is an entire philosophical paradigm, with consequences for nearly every aspect of the study of human behavior and politics. Specifically, hermeneutics maintains that the study of human beliefs and actions is historical, cultural, and narrative in form. Studying human agency inescapably requires the interpretation of meanings—relating beliefs, actions, and practices to further webs of meaning. Because hermeneutics or interpretivism is a philosophy, it must either be accepted or rejected as a whole."

(Bevir and Blakely 2018: 2)

The hermeneutic approach refuses claims of positivism. Meaning attached to action by social actors is highly fundamental to the hermeneutic approach. Because of this, the hermeneutical school is usually seen as the radical opposite of positivism. In fact, we can observe that hermeneutics entered social research literature as an attack on positivism. Dilthey is usually credited for introducing hermeneutic principles as a foundation for human sciences with his book *Introduction to the Human Sciences*. Realizing the limitations of positivism and its restricted definition of science, Dilthey aimed to develop an alternative methodology to positivism to the study of the social world: 'Understanding and interpretation is the method used throughout the human sciences. It unites all their functions and contains all their truths. At each instance understanding opens up a world' (Sherratt 2006: 70).

3. Hermeneutic Circle

In order to achieve a full understanding of a text or any cultural artifact from a particular culture, one has to understand that culture as a whole and, in turn, to understand that particular culture as a whole one has to understand the meanings of individual cultural products. This circular relationship between a part and a whole is known as the hermeneutical circle. It can be applied to many things: relationship between a sentence and a paragraph, a paragraph and a chapter, a chapter and a book, individual and society and so on.

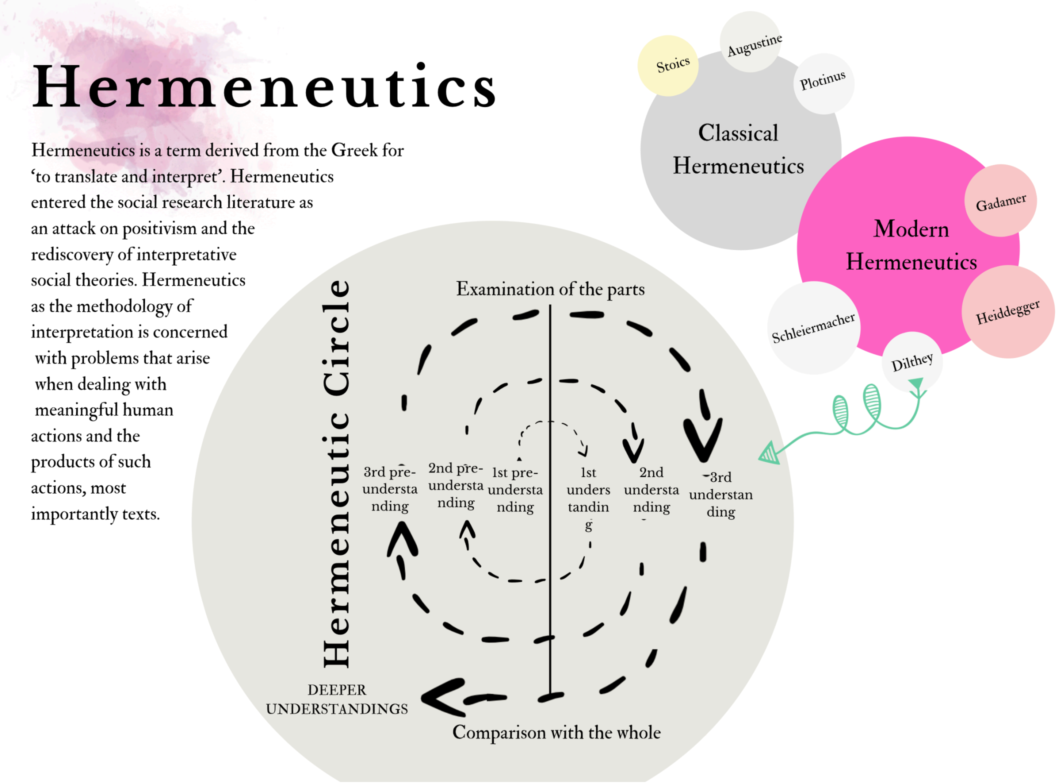

Hermeneutics
Hermeneutics is a term derived from the Greek for 'to translate and interpret'. Hermeneutics entered the social research literature as an attack on positivism and the rediscovery of interpretative social theories. Hermeneutics as the methodology of interpretation is concerned with problems that arise when dealing with meaningful human actions and the products of such actions, most importantly texts.
Stoics
Augustine
Plotinus
Classical Hermeneutics
Modern Hermeneutics
Gadamer
Heiddegger
Schleiermacher
Dilthey
Hermeneutic Circle
Examination of the parts
3rd pre-understanding
2nd pre-understanding
1st pre-understanding
1st understanding
2nd understanding
3rd understanding
DEEPER UNDERSTANDINGS
Comparison with the whole

Figure 11.2: Hermeneutic circle

"A brief example may be useful for further clarifying the idea of the hermeneutic circle. Consider, for instance, the task of understanding a paragraph in any piece of writing. The paragraph in question must, of course, be understood by means of understanding the individual sentences that make up that paragraph. On the other hand, it is often the case that the meaning of individual sentences in a paragraph becomes clear only when we already have an understanding of what the paragraph as a whole is trying to convey, or what the paragraph is "driving at," or what is the "direction" of the entire paragraph. Similar part/whole dialectics constituting the hermeneutic circle may be seen to operate between words and sentences, paragraphs and chapters, chapters and the book, individual books written by an author and the author's complete oeuvre, authorial oeuvre and the genre to which a specific oeuvre may belong, and so on (Prasad 2002: 18)."

Alasdair Macintyre: Man as Story-telling Animal

"[M]an is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. But the key question for men is not about their own authorship; I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?' We enter human society, that is, with one or more imputed characters—roles into which we have been drafted—and we have to learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed. It is through hearing stories about wicked stepmothers, lost children, good but misguided kings, wolves that suckle twin boys, youngest sons who receive no inheritance but must make their own way in the world and eldest sons who waste their inheritance on riotous living and go into exile to live with the swine, that children earn or mis-learn both what a child and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what the ways of the world are. Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words. Hence there is no way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources. Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things. Vico was right and so was Joyce. And so too of course is that moral tradition from heroic society to its medieval heirs according to which the telling of stories has a key part in educating us into the virtues." (MacIntyre 2007: 216)

4. Double Hermeneutic

Another important concept used in hermeneutics is double hermeneutic. Similar to many other concepts, it is difficult to attribute the coining of the term to a specific name. Nevertheless, it is often attributed to Antony Giddens. The development of the concept is also ascribed to the other prominent figures of hermeneutics including Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. Double hermeneutic draws attention to the meaning-making and its complexities that accompany any interpretive research process within various disciplines of the social sciences. This meaning-making takes place between the two contexts that "interact dialogically and co-inform one another within the research process" (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe 2010). These two contexts are the context of the research object and the context of the research subject (researcher). Notice that, double hermeneutic requires more than simply considering the researchers context (known as reflexivity) or the context of the object that is being studied. Double hermeneutic is about the production of meaning that takes place as a result of the interaction between the two contexts within the research process. Giddens explains double hermeneutic as follows: "The social scientist studies a world, the social world, which is constituted as meaningful by those who produce and reproduce it in their activities -human subjects. To describe human behaviour in a valid way is in principle to be able to participate in the forms of life which constitute, and are constituted by, that behaviour. This is already a hermeneutic task. But social science is itself a 'form of life', with its own technical concepts. Hermeneutics hence enters into the social sciences on two, related levels…" (Giddens 1982: 7)

In the box below, you will read an example of the hermeneutic approach in educational research:

Double Hermeneutic at Work in Case Study Research

The following example illustrates the presence, or effect, of the double hermeneutic using a fictitious sketch of a case study scenario in educational research:

A researcher (e.g., an ethnographer conducting a case study in an elementary school classroom) collects data relevant to a research participant (e.g., a child learning to read) through participant observation. Subsequent to collection, the data are analyzed by the researcher to identify themes relevant to the reading process (phonological awareness, use of cu[e]ing systems, emotional responses, etc.). The researcher then situates the identified themes within the current body of literature on reading and learning to read and, on the basis of interpretations of the data, uses the results of the case study to generate questions for further inquiry. In this scenario the double hermeneutic requires that the researcher acknowledge not only the context being researched (a child learning to read) but also the research itself (the act of defining the process of a child learning to read through ethnographic research). Because reading and research present as both historical constructs and contingent agents within such an inquiry, the research participant (the child) is not a finite object of study; instead, the child is engaged in meaning-making, and this meaning-making produces data, which are subsequently used in meaning-making by the researcher. Because of the effect of the double hermeneutic, the researcher is similarly implicated, because the act of researching also contributes to the production of knowledge within the research context. Consequently, the presence of the researcher serves to alter the meaning-making of the researcher (the ethnographer) and the researched (the child) throughout the research process.

The researcher needs to take into account, therefore, the dialogical production of meaning within the research context. The effect of the double hermeneutic means the research context is not "meaning neutral"; instead, the researcher (an ethnographer, in this case) and the researched (a child learning to read, in this case) are both active participants in the production of knowledge and the interpretation of meaning. Because of the historical and contingent production of meanings inherent in the multiple layers of the inquiry, the double hermeneutic engages both the researched and the researcher in a continuous interpretation of meanings within and through the discourses within which the research is embedded."

Mills, Albert J., Durepos, Gabrielle., and Wiebe, Elden. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. Los Angeles, [Calif.] ; SAGE, 2010: 323.

Section B.
MULTIPLEX HERMENEUTICS

"Everything is either a window or a wall."
Rumi

1. Multiplex hermeneutics is based on multiplex ontology

Hermeneutics is interpreting symbolic representations and thus transferring them into everyday language so that everyone can understand the meaning hidden under the symbolic expressions. You may ask: If it is possible to express something in everyday language, then why do thinkers revert to symbolic discourse? This is because symbolic explanation better expresses a certain reality that is not readily available to our faculties of knowledge, such as the senses and the intellect. Let us consider Plato's famous allegory of the cave as he describes in his famoıus dialogue in the *Republic*.

The Allegory of the Cave*

Platon

Plato puts this allegory into the mouth of Socrates who has the following dialogue with Glaucon:

SOCRATES: Imagine this: People live under the earth in a cavelike dwelling. Stretching a long way up toward the daylight is its entrance, toward which the entire cave is gathered. The people have been in this dwelling since childhood, shackled by the legs and neck. Thus, they stay in the same place so that there is only one thing for them to look that: whatever they encounter in front of their faces. But because they are shackled, they are unable to turn their heads around. A fire is behind them, and there is a wall between the fire and the prisoners. The images carried before the fire. What the prisoners see and hear are merely the shadows that are continually projected on the wall opposite them by the glow of the fire.

But somehow a prisoner gets free from their chains and, along with that, cured of their lack of insight, and likewise consider what kind of lack of insight must be if the following were to happen to those who were chained. Then he walks back to the fire. And if someone were then to show him any of the things that were passing by and forced him to answer the question about what it was, don't you think that he would be a wit's end and in addition would consider that what he previously saw with his own eyes was more unhidden than what was now being shown to him by someone else.

GLAUCON: Yes, absolutely.

SOCRATES: And if someone even forced him to look into the glare of the fire, his eyes would hurt him, and he would then turn away and flee back to that which he is capable of looking at. He would in that case decide that what he could see before without any help was in fact clearer than what was now being shown to him.

Now, however, if someone, using force, were to pull him who had been freed from his chains away from there and to drag him up the cave's rough and steep ascent and not to let go of him until he had dragged him out into the light of the sun. Would not the one who had been dragged like this feel, in the process, pain and rage? And when he got into the sunlight, wouldn't his eyes be filled with the glare, and wouldn't he thus be unable to see any of the things that are now revealed to him as the unhidden?

GLAUCON: He would not be able to do that at all, at least not right away.

SOCRATES: It would obviously take some getting accustomed, I think, if it should be a matter of taking into one's eyes that which is up there outside the cave, in the light of the sun. Shadows and reflections. And in this process of acclimatization he would first and most easily be able to look at (1) shadows and after that (2) the images of people and the rest of things as they are reflected in water. Later, however, he would be able to view (3) the things themselves [the beings, instead of the dim reflections]. But within the range of such things, he might well contemplate what there is in the heavenly dome, and this dome itself, more easily during the night by looking at the light of the stars and the moon, [more easily, that is to say,] than by looking at the sun and its glare during the day.

SOCRATES: But I think that finally he would be in the condition to look at (4) the sun itself, not just at its reflection whether in water or wherever else it might appear, but at the sun itself, as it is in and of itself and in the place proper to it and to contemplate of what sort it is; and having done all that, by this time he would also be able to gather the following about the sun: (1) that it is that which grants both the seasons and the years; (2) it is that which governs whatever there is in the now visible region of sunlight; and (3) that it is also the cause of all those things that the people dwelling in the cave have before they eyes in some way or other.

GLAUCON: It is obvious that he would get to these things -- the sun and whatever stands in its light -- after he had gone out beyond those previous things, the merely reflections and shadows.

SOCRATES: And then what? If he again recalled his first dwelling, and the "knowing" that passes as the norm there, and the people with whom he once was chained, don't you think he would consider himself lucky because of the transformation that had happened and, by contrast, feel sorry for them?
GLAUCON: Very much so.

SOCRATES: However, what if among the people in the previous dwelling place, the cave, certain honors and commendations were established for whomever most clearly catches sight of what passes by and also best remembers which of them normally is brought by first, which one later, and which ones at the same time? And what if there were honors for whoever could most easily foresee which one might come by next?

SOCRATES: Do you think the one who had gotten out of the cave would still envy those within the cave and would want to compete with them who are esteemed and who have power? Or would not he or she much rather wish for the condition that Homer speaks of, namely "to live on the land [above ground] as the paid menial of another destitute peasant"? Wouldn't he or she prefer to put up with absolutely anything else rather than associate with those opinions that hold in the cave and be that kind of human being?

GLAUCON: I think that he would prefer to endure everything rather than be that kind of human being.

SOCRATES: And now, I responded, consider this: If this person who had gotten out of the cave were to go back down again and sit in the same place as before, would he not find in that case, coming suddenly out of the sunlight, that his eyes were filled with darkness?" Now if once again, along with those who had remained shackled there, the freed person had to engage in the business of

> asserting and maintaining opinions about the shadows -- while his eyes are still weak and before they have readjusted, an adjustment that would require quite a bit of time -- would he not then be exposed to ridicule down there? And would they not let him know that he had gone up but only in order to come back down into the cave with his eyes ruined -- and thus it certainly does not pay to go up.
>
> SOCRATES: And if they can get hold of this person who takes it in hand to free them from their chains and to lead them up, and if they could kill him, will they not actually kill him?
>
> GLAUCON: They certainly will.
>
> *Translation by Thomas Sheehan retrieved from:
> https://web.stanford.edu/class/ihum40/cave.pdf

Now you can see that in this allegorical story Plato claims that there is a multiple reality, one is real while the other is a shadow of that reality. But we never see or feel that reality; then how can we know that it actually exists? In order to explain this he uses symbolic representations that our mind can comprehend. Then, he moves on to explain how we can interpret these symbols. It is clear that Plato's hermeneutics is based on his ontology. In the same way, we find in the multiplex ontology three levels of reality:

- Divine realm
- Non-material world (*malakût*)
- Material world.

Obviously, interpretation concerning these three realms will also be multiplex:

Ontology	**Epistemology**	**Hermeneutics**
Divine realm	Revelation	Allegorical (*ta'wîl*)
Non-material world	Reason	Multiple allegory (*tamthîl*)
Material world	Senses	Rational interpretation (*tahqîq*)

For *ta'wîl* the light verse can be given as an example, which is not open for rational interpretation and, as such, its interpretation is accepted on the basis of its source, namely, Revelation: (24/al-Nur, 35)

> Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.

For *tamthîl* we may give the following example:

> Long ago, two brothers set off on a long journey. They continued on their way until they arrived at a crossroad. They did not know which way to go but they saw a serious-looking man and asked him: "Which road is good?" He told them: "If you take the right road there are rules you must obey and comply with the law and order, but within that hardship you will find security and happiness. However, if you take the left road there is freedom and no restraint, but within its freedom lies dangers and wretchedness. Now, the choice is yours!"
>
> After listening to this the brother who possessed a good character took the right road and conformed to the law. The other brother, who was reckless and desired more freedom, chose the left road which lacked any restrictions. Thus, this man went until he found himself in a desolate wilderness. He suddenly heard a terrifying sound and saw that a great lion had come out of the forest and was about to attack him. He hastily fled. He came across a deep waterless well, and out of fear he decided to jump in. He fell half-way down the well and his hands met a tree. He clung on to it. The tree which was growing out of the walls of the well had two roots. Two rats, one white and one black, were attacking and gnawing through them. He looked up and saw that the lion was waiting at the top of the well like a sentry. He looked down and saw a terrifying dragon. Its mouth was as big as the mouth of the well. Then he looked at the wall of the well and saw poisonous snakes gathering around him. He looked up at the mouth of the well and saw a fig-tree. But it was

not an ordinary tree; it bore the fruit of many different trees, from walnuts to pomegranates.

Thus, due to his lack of thought and foolishness, the man did not understand that this was not just some ordinary matter, these things were not here by chance, and that there were mysterious secrets concealed in these strange beings. And he did not grasp that there was someone very powerful directing them. Now, although his heart, spirit, and mind were secretly weeping and wailing at this grievous situation, his carnal soul pretended that it was nothing; it closed its ears to the weeping of his heart and spirit, and deceiving itself, started to eat the tree's fruit as though it was in a garden. But some of the fruit was poisonous and harmful, and so they had made him sick.

Thus, through his foolishness and lack of understanding, this unhappy man thought that what he was witnessing was ordinary and represented the actual truth. So that is the way he was treated, and will be treated. He neither dies so that he is saved from this tormenting situation.

NOW the other intelligent brother went on his way, but he suffered no distress like his brother. For, due to his fine morals, he thought of good things and imagined good things. Everything was friendly and familiar to him. And he did not suffer any difficulty and hardship like his brother, for he knew the law and order of things and followed it. He found it easy. He went on his way freely and in peace and security. Then he came across a garden which had lovely flowers and fruits, but because it was not cared for it also had other things that were rotten and filthy. His brother had also entered such a garden, but he only noticed and occupied himself with the filthy things which eventually turned his stomach, and so he had left the garden and moved on without being able to rest. But this man who acted according to the rules by 'looking on the good side of everything,' and paid no attention to the repulsive things benefited a great deal from those things that were good, and having rested well, he left the garden and continued on his way.

Later, also like the first brother, he had entered a vast desert, and had suddenly heard the roar of a lion which was attacking him. He was frightened, but not as much as his brother. For, because of his good thoughts and positive attitude, he thought to himself: "This desert has a ruler, and it is possible that this lion is a servant under the ruler's command," and found consolation. But he still fled until he came across an empty well sixty yards deep. He threw himself into it. Like his brother, his hand clasped a tree half-way down and he remained suspended in the air. He looked and saw two animals gnawing through the tree's two roots. He looked up and saw the lion, and looked down and saw the dragon. Just like his brother he was seeing a most strange situation. He was terrified like him, but his terror was a thousand times less than his brother's. For his good morals had given him good thoughts, and good thoughts show the good side of everything.

Now the interpretation: Of the two brothers, one is a believing and righteous person. The other is an unbelieving spirit and a depraved heart. Of the two roads, the one to the right is the way of religion and belief in God, while the left one is the road of rebellion and denial. The garden on the road is man's fleeting life in human society and civilization, where good and evil, good and bad, as well as clean and dirty coexist side by side.

As for the desert, it is the earth and this world. The lion represents death which follows us as all throughout our life. The well symbolizes the human body and the duration of one's life. The tree signifies the time span and substance of life. The two animals, one white and one black, are night and day. The dragon is the road to the Intermediate Realm and pavilion of the hereafter, whose mouth is the grave. But for the believer, that mouth is a gateway from a prison to a garden.

As for the poisonous vermin, they are the calamities of this world. But for the believer they are like gentle Divine warnings and favors of God in order to prevent humans from falling into heedlessness. The fruits on the tree are the

> bounties of this world which God has made in the form of bounties of the hereafter.
>
> The tree that produces an assortment of abundant fruits, despite being a single tree, indicates God's power. For 'to make everything from one thing,' that is, to make all plants and fruits from earth, and to create all animals from a fluid, and to create all the limbs and organs of animals from a simple food, together with 'making everything as one thing,' that is, like the art of weaving a simple skin and making flesh specific to each animal, from the great variety of foods that animals eat, is an inimitable stamp and seal peculiar to the God Almighty. Then in tasawwuf they draw so many moral lessons from this parable (adopted from Nursi, *The Words*, trans. S. Vahide, "The Eighth Word").

These methods of interpretation are applied in various disciplines also as follows:

2. *Tafsir*

Commentators and Qur'anic scholars formulated various rules of interpretation, which resulted in the emergence and development of three basic kinds of tafsir, which are:

a. ***Tafsir* by transmission (*tafsir bi'l-riwaya*):** Hermeneutics based on oral transmission:

This approach is intertextual and objective. It includes the interpretation of the Qur'an by Qur'anic verses and draws on explanation made by the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions. Books of this kind include those attributed to Ibn Abbas, Ibn Khatim, Ibn Habban, and Imam Suyuti.

b. ***Tafsir* by reason (*tafsir bi'l-dirayah*):** Rational hermeneutics

This approach is rational and objective. It is not based directly on the transmission of knowledge from the past but rather on reason. *Tafsir* here is derived through opinion based on reason and *ijtihad* or *qiyas*. In this area we find tafsirs like *Mafatih al-Ghayb* by Fakh al-Din and *al-Kashshaf* by Zamakhshari (d. 1144).

c. ***Tafsir* by symbols (*tafsir bi'l-ishara*):** Allegorical hermeneutics

This approach is intuitive and subjective. It goes into the details of the concepts and ideas associated with the words and verses of the Qur'an. This kind of tafsir is often produced by the Sufis. The most important are those by Kashani and al-Khazin.

3. *Nahw* - Syntax

There are two approaches being used for interpretation in the linguistic studies: *Mânâ-i ismî and mânâ-i harfî.*

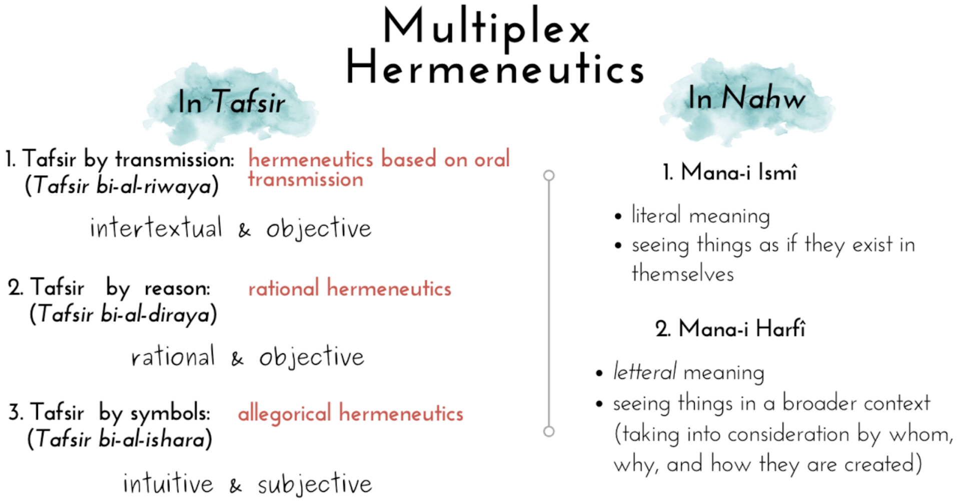

Multiplex Hermeneutics
In Tafsir
1. Tafsir by transmission: (Tafsir bi-al-riwaya)
hermeneutics based on oral transmission
intertextual & objective
2. Tafsir by reason: (Tafsir bi-al-diraya)
rational hermeneutics
rational & objective
3. Tafsir by symbols: (Tafsir bi-al-ishara)
allegorical hermeneutics
intuitive & subjective
In Nahw
1. Mana-i Ismî
• literal meaning
• seeing things as if they exist in themselves
2. Mana-i Harfî
• letteral meaning
• seeing things in a broader context (taking into consideration by whom, why, and how they are created)

Figure 11.3: A brief explanation of multiplex hermeneutics in *tafsir* and *nahw*

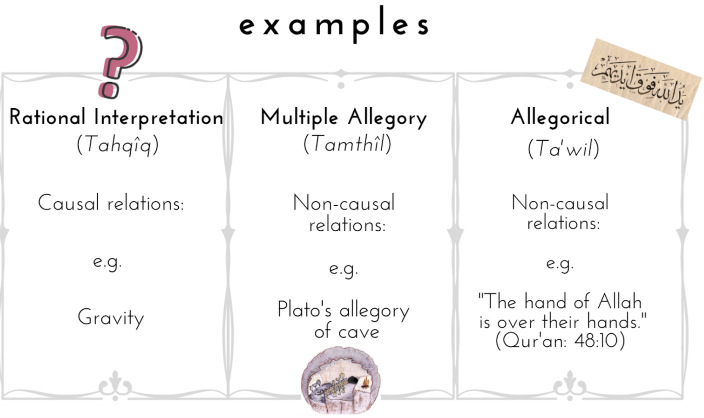
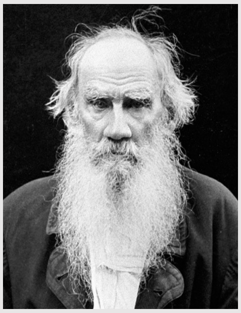

examples
Rational Interpretation
(Tahqîq)
Causal relations:
e.g.
Gravity
Multiple Allegory
(Tamthîl)
Non-causal relations:
e.g.
Plato's allegory of cave
Allegorical
(Ta'wil)
Non-causal relations:
e.g.
"The hand of Allah is over their hands." (Qur'an: 48:10)

Figure 11.4: Examples for multiplex hermeneutics

Leo Tolstoy's Eastern Fable



"There is an old Eastern fable about a traveller who is taken unawares on the steppes by a ferocious wild animal. In order to escape the beast the traveller hides in an empty well, but at the bottom of the well he sees a dragon with its jaws open, ready to devour him. The poor fellow does not dare to climb out because he is afraid of being eaten by the rapacious beast, neither does he dare drop to the bottom of the well for fear of being eaten by the dragon. So he seizes hold of a branch of a bush that is growing in the crevices of the well and clings on to it. His arms grow weak and he knows that he will soon have to resign himself to the death that awaits him on either side. Yet he still clings on, and while he is holding on to the branch he looks around and sees that two mice, one black and one white, are steadily working their way round the bush he is hanging from, gnawing away at it. Sooner or later they will eat through it and the branch will snap, and he will fall into the jaws of the dragon. The traveller sees this and knows that he will inevitably perish. But while he is still hanging there he sees some drops of honey on the leaves of the bush, stretches out his tongue and licks them. In the same way I am clinging to the tree of life, knowing full well that the dragon of death inevitably awaits me, ready to tear me to pieces, and I cannot understand how I have fallen into this torment. And I try licking the honey that once consoled me, but it no longer gives me pleasure. The white mouse and the black mouse – day and night – are gnawing at the branch from which I am hanging. I can see the dragon clearly and the honey no longer tastes sweet. I can see only one thing; the inescapable dragon and the mice, and I cannot tear my eyes away from them. And this is no fable but the truth, the truth that is irrefutable and intelligible to everyone.

The delusion of the joys of life that had formerly stifled my fear of the dragon no longer deceived me. No matter how many times I am told: you cannot understand the meaning of life, do not think about it but live, I cannot do so because I have already done it for too long. Now I cannot help seeing day and night chasing me and leading me to my death. This is all I can see because it is the only truth. All the rest is a lie. Those two drops of honey, which more than all else had diverted my eyes from the cruel truth, my love for my family and for my writing, which I called art – I no longer found sweet."

Tolstoy, Leo. A Confession and other religious writings. Penguin UK, 1987.

Key Words

double hermeneutic:	is a concept that draws attention to the production of meaning that takes place as a result of interaction between the two contexts (the context of the social scientist and the context of the research subject) within the research process.
hermeneutic circle:	is the circular relationship between a part and a whole that emerges when one attempts to study an unfamiliar cultural product
fusion of horizons:	a concept developed by Gadamer to explain the process of understanding which for him is the collision of the horizons of the interpreter and the text.
geisteswissenschaften:	is the term used in the German intellectual tradition to refer to human sciences.

Summary

- The early stage of hermeneutics focused mainly on the interpretation of holy scriptures – the Bible and other literary texts.
- Later this was broadened to include everything: not only the Bible but any text as well as even non-textual interpretation of symbols used in social life.
- Schleiermacher is considered to be the founder of modern hermeneutics.
- Hermeneutics was adapted to the social sciences based on the metaphor of human action as a meaningful text.

- It developed as an attack on the rise of positivism in the social sciences.
- Wilhelm Dilthey came up with the idea of constructing, understanding, and hermeneutics as the foundation of the human sciences and became very influential in German-speaking countries.
- Representatives of the hermeneutic school claim that human agency can be understood in the social sciences only if a hermeneutic philosophical perspective is adopted.

Dig Deep

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MODULE 6

MODULE

6

CHAPTER 12
Multiplexity in Ibn Khaldūn’s Works

CHAPTER 13
Applied Multiplexity and Khaldūnism: Past and Present

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you will be able to:

- engage with Ibn Khaldūn's concepts thoughts;
- learn how multiplexity is applied in Ibn Khaldūn's works;
- learn what Ibn Khaldūn offers to current discussions in modern academia;
- discover how Ibn Khaldūn can be an alternative to hegemonic approaches;
- reflect on Ibn Khaldūn's ontological, epistemological and methodological stances;
- find out how to distinguish between ontological, epistemological and methodological preferences of different scholars.

Chapter Twelve

MULTIPLEXITY IN IBN KHALDŪN'S WORKS

Focus Questions

- ◊ Who is Ibn Khaldūn?
- ◊ What is the science that Ibn Khaldun founded?
- ◊ What new concepts were coined by Ibn Khaldūn?
- ◊ Why do we choose Ibn Khaldūn as an example of multiplexity?
- ◊ What is the relevance of Ibn Khaldūn to social sciences today?
- ◊ How is multiplex ontology, epistemology, and methodology applied in Ibn Khaldūn's works?
- ◊ How does Ibn Khaldūn conceive human beings?
- ◊ What are the types of knowledge according to Ibn Khaldūn?
- ◊ Is it possible to gain knowledge via divine inspiration according to Ibn Khaldūn?
- ◊ Is it possible to speak of regularities in society according to Ibn Khaldūn?

In this module, we will be focusing on Ibn Khaldūn's thought as a prime example of multiplex ontology, epistemology and methodology. You will learn how multiplexity is applied in Ibn Khaldūn's works and, accordingly, you will be able to understand how Ibn Khaldūn's ontological mindmap shaped the underpinnings of his epistemological principles and how these epistemological underpinnings led him to adopt certain methods.

You will discover how Ibn Khaldūn was widely known among Ottoman scholars and also how his ideas were applied during the Ottoman Empire. In addition, you will come to notice how Ibn Khaldūn can be taken as an alternative to the present approaches in the academia today. You will also get to know the opportunities Ibn Khaldūn offers for the social sciences, particularly in the fields of history, politics, economics, sociology and civilization studies.

Section A.
ONTOLOGY IN IBN KHALDŪN'S WORKS

1. Who is Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406)?

- ʿAbd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami, known as Ibn Khaldun, was born in **Tunis**.
- He memorized the Qurʾan by heart, learned grammar, *fiqh*, *hadith*, rhetoric, philology, and poetry. He continued his studies until the age of 19 and studied also philosophy on his own.
- He served at many public offices in many different countries throughout his life including Morocco, Spain and Egypt.
- He was a **historian**, **social scientist**, ***faqîh***, and a ***sûfi***.

2. Ibn Khaldūn's Works

1) *Kitab al-'ibar wa diwan al-mubtada wa al-khabar fi ayyam al-'arab wa al-'ajam wa al-barbar* (Book of Examples and the Collection of Origins of the History of the Arabs and Berbers): *Kitab al-'ibar* is a three-volume historical study on Arabs and Berbers. His magnum opus *Muqaddimah* consists of *Kitab al-'ibar's* introduction and its first volume.

2) *Al-Ta'rīf bi Ibn Khaldūn wa rihlatihi gharban wa sharqan* (Information on Ibn Khaldūn, Author of this Work and His Travels East and West): Ibn Khaldūn's Autobiography. Originally

appended to the *Kitab al-'ibar.*

3) *Lubâb al-muhassal fî usūl al-dîn* (The Resume of the Compendium on the Fundamentals of Religion): A summary of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's work Compendium of the Sciences of the Ancients and Moderns.

4) *Shifa' al-sa'il li-tahdhib al-masa'il* (The Healing of the Seekers): A work on Sufism.

5) Ibn Khaldūn is said to have written five more works, but these are not extant. A commentary on the *Burda* of al-Busiri; An outline of logic; A treatise on arithmetic; Resumes of works by Ibn Rushd; A commentary on a poem by Ibn al-Khatib (Alatas 2015: 23-24)

3. Ibn Khaldūn as an example of Multiplexity: Why Ibn Khaldūn?

In the non-Western world, Western social theories are generally presented as universal truth. Ibn Khaldūn provides intellectually independent opportunities when it comes to explaining Western and non-Western social phenomena. Western sociologists consider Ibn Khaldūn as the founder of both social and human studies in the scientific sense. However, there are very significant ontological, epistemological, and methodological differences between Ibn Khaldūn and modern social scientists. Therefore, it is not entirely accurate to see him as a pioneer or even a precursor of modern uniplex social theories.

> "Returning to our selves means, in a sense, returning to Ibn Khaldun."
> Cemil Meriç (Meriç 2013: 160)

As Irwin emphasized, Ibn Khaldūn's worldview is a multiplex and religious one (Irwin 2018: xiii), while the worldview of the prominent modern social scientists is materialist and secular. It therefore does not make any sense to claim that he is a precursor of Marx, Durkheim and Auguste Comte. Moreover, referring to Ibn Khaldūn merely as a pioneer or precursor indicates that his time has ended and that he is nothing but of historical value. Yet Ibn Khaldūn's ideas are not only an integral part of intellectual history, but it also represents, in essence, a living holistic approach.

Ibn Khaldūn's approach and ideas represent the multiplex understanding of existence, knowledge, method and truth which is explicitly very different from positivist assumptions and modern social theories based on uniplexity. However, Ibn Khaldūn's approach does not exclude empirical and other modern approaches, it in fact includes and exceeds them through multiplexity. Ibn Khaldūn, with his multiplex approach, epitomizes a typical model of a scholar in Islamic civilization: the likes of him could be commonly found before and after the period in which he lived.

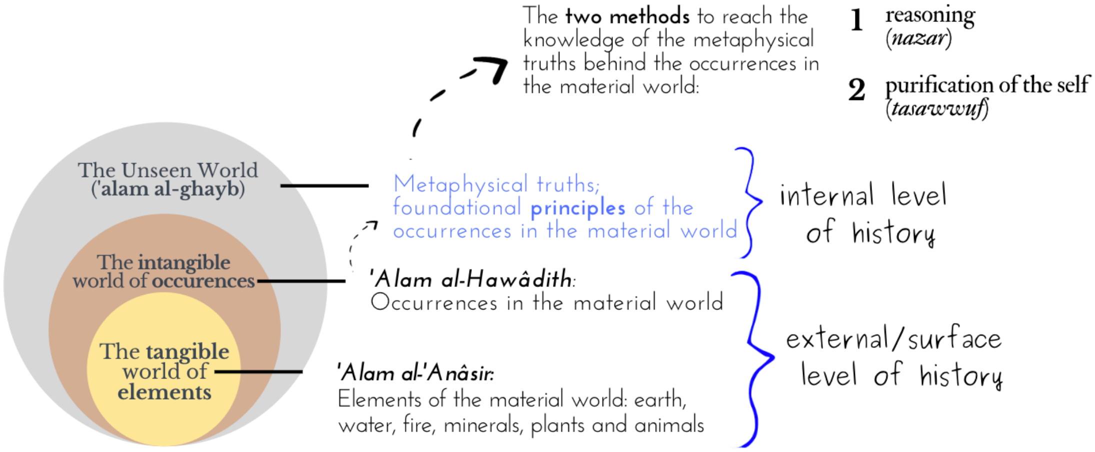

The two methods to reach the knowledge of the metaphysical truths behind the occurrences in the material world:
1 reasoning (nazar)
2 purification of the self (tasawwuf)
The Unseen World ('alam al-ghayb)
Metaphysical truths; foundational principles of the occurrences in the material world
internal level of history
The intangible world of occurences
'Alam al-Hawâdith: Occurrences in the material world
The tangible world of elements
'Alam al-'Anâsir: Elements of the material world: earth, water, fire, minerals, plants and animals
external/surface level of history

Figure 12.1: Ibn Khaldūn's ontology and methodology

Like other Muslim scholars, Ibn Khaldūn believes that there are three main levels of existence. These levels are the material level of existence, which includes the tangible world of elements and the world of creation, the non-material world which is also referred to as the intangible world of occurrences, and the divine world which is also called the unseen world.

4. The Material Level of Existence

4.1. The Tangible World of Elements (*'Ālam al-'Anāṣir*)

According to Ibn Khaldūn, this world, with all the created things in it, has a certain order and solid construction. The world, writes Ibn Khaldūn in his magnum opus *The Muqaddimah*, shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some parts of creation with others, and transformations of some existent things into others, in a pattern that is both remarkable and endless. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the world of the visible or tangible elements are arranged gradually and continually in ascending order, from earth to water, from water to air, and from air to fire. This demonstrates that Ibn Khaldūn followed the common view of his time which saw the material world as being composed of four elements: air, water, fire and soil. Eventually, the world of the spheres, which is finer than anything else, is reached. These worlds are in layers which are interconnected (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 194)

اعلم- أرشدنا الله و إياك - أنا نشاهد هذا العالم بما فيه من المخلوقات كلها على هيئة من الترتيب و الإحكام و ربط الأسباب بالمسببات، و اتصال الأكوان بالأكوان، و استحالة بعض الموجودات إلى بعض، لا تنقضي عجائبه في ذلك، و لا تنتهي غاياته. و أبدأ من ذلك بالعالم المحسوس (الجسماني). و أولا عالم العناصر المشاهد كيف تدرج صاعدا من الأرض إلى الماء، ثم إلى الهواء، ثم إلى النار متصلا بعضها ببعض. و كل واحد منها مستعد أن يستحيل إلى ما يليه صاعدا و هابطا، و يستحيل بعض الأوقات. و الصاعد منها ألطف مما قبله إلى أن ينتهي إلى عالم الأفلاك و هو ألطف من الكل على طبقات اتصل بعضها ببعض على هيئة لا يدرك الحس منها إلا الحركات فقط، و بها يهتدي بعضهم إلى معرفة مقاديرها و أوضاعها، و ما بعد ذلك من وجود الذوات التي لها هذه الآثار فيها (ابن خلدون 2013 : 131).

5. The World of Creation (*'Ālam al-Takwīn*)

5.1. Minerals, Plants, Animals and Human Beings

ثم انظر إلى عالم التكوين كيف ابتدأ من المعادن، ثم النبات، ثم الحيوان، على هيئة بديعة من التدريج. آخر أفق المعادن متصل بأول أفق النبات، مثل الحشائش، وما لا بذرة له. وآخر أفق النبات مثل النخل والكرم متصل بأول أفق الحيوان مثل الحلزون والصدف لم يوجد لهما إلا قوة اللمس فقط. ومعنى الاتصال في هذه المكونات أن آخر أفق منها مستعد بالاستعداد الغريب لأن يصير أول أفق الذي بعده. واتسع عالم الحيوان وتعددت أنواعه، وانتهى في تدريج التكوين إلى الانسان صاحب الفكر والروية، ترتفع إليه من عالم القدرة الذي اجتمع فيه الحس و الإدراك، ولم ينته إلى الروية والفكر بالفعل، وكان ذلك في أول أفق من الانسان بعده، وهذا غاية شهودنا (ابن خلدون 2013: 131).

According to Ibn Khaldūn there are four levels of visible creation to be studied by various sciences which make up the levels of existence at the material tangible world, and these are minerals, plants, animals and human beings. This view is not peculiar to Ibn Khaldūn as it was commonly shared throughout the intellectual history of Islam. These categories are ordered in ranks, minerals being at the bottom and human beings at the top. This ranking is sometimes misinterpreted as evolution, although Ibn Khaldūn never refers to such shifts taking place from one category to the other.

Existence, however, is not limited to the tangible world according to Ibn Khaldūn who believes that there is also an invisible world and a divine world. Each category and level of existence is studied by an appropriate methodology. This comprehensive view includes and supersedes the idealist and materialist uniplex approaches you have thus far learned about. Ibn Khaldūn's comprehensive view incorporates an empirical view, which is championed by positivists, but goes beyond it without falling prey to reductionism and uniplexity. It also incorporates interpretive methods, which are championed by idealists, and critical methods used to analyze ready-made realities offered to us, which are championed by critical approaches, and yet it goes beyond these as well. According to Ibn Khaldūn, reality is empirical (tangible, observable and measurable as positivists suggest). At the same time, reality is socially and historically constructed, which may shape and obscure the understanding of an ordinary human being as contended by critical theorists. Reality is also accessible only through the intermediation of our minds as upheld by idealists.

However, Ibn Khaldūn represents a multiplex ontology that goes one step further by incorporating a third component, namely the divine, which is entirely rejected in other approaches. Like other Muslim scholars, precedence is accorded to the divine level in the presently experienced social and physical reality: human beings always engage with God and divine reality. Different levels of multiplex reality are in continuous connection and interaction with each other. Human beings are interconnected with all levels of existence from material to divine. And their ties are studied by specialized disciplines ranging from the natural sciences to the social sciences, the humanities and theology.

As you have seen before, uniplex approaches focus either on the tangible or intangible level of existence at the expense of the other. Thus, they fail to offer a comprehensive and holistic understanding of reality.

6. The World of Occurrences (*'Ālam al-Hawādith*)

اعلم أن عالم الكائنات يشتمل على ذوات محضة، كالعناصر وآثارها والمكونات الثلاثة عنها، التي هي المعدن والنبات والحيوان. وهذه كلها متعلقات القدرة الإلهية وعلى أفعال صادرة عن الحيوانات، واقعة بمقصودها، متعلقة بالقدرة التي جعل الله لها عليها: فمنها منتظم مرتب، وهي الأفعال البشرية، ومنها غير منتظم ولا مرتب وهي أفعال الحيوانات غير البشر، وذلك الفكر يدرك الترتيب بين الحوادث بالطبع أو بالوضع، فإذا قصد إيجاد شيء من الأشياء، فلأجل الترتيب بين الحوادث لابد من التفطن بسببه أو علته أو شرطه، وهي على الجملة مبادئه، إذ لا يوجد إلا ثانيا عنها، ولا يمكن إيقاع المتقدم متأخرا ولا المتأخر متقدما. وذلك المبدأ قد يكون له مبدأ آخر من تلك المبادئ لا يوجد إلا متأخرا عنه، وقد يرتقي ذلك أو ينتهي، فإذا انتهى إلى آخر المبادىء في مرتبتين أو ثلاث أو أزيد، وشرع في العمل الذي يوجد به ذلك الشيء بدأ بالمبدأ الأخير الذي انتهى إليه الفكر، فكان أول عمله. ثم تابع ما بعده إلى آخر المسببات التي كانت أول فكرته. مثلا: لو فكر في إيجاد سقف يكنه انتقل بذهنه إلى لحائط الذي يدعمه، ثم إلى الأساس الذي يقف عليه الحائط فهو آخر الفكرة، ثم يبدأ في العمل بالأساس، ثم بالحائط، ثم بالسقف، وهو آخر العمل.

وهذا معنى قولهم: أول العمل آخر الفكرة، وأول الفكرة آخر العمل، فلا يتم فعل الإنسان في الخارج إلا بالفكر في هذه المترتبات لتوقف بعضها على بعض، ثم يشرع في فعلها. وأول هذا الفكر هو المسبب الأخير، وهو آخرها في العمل. وأولها في العمل هو المسبب الأول وهو آخرها في الفكر، ولأجل العثور على هذا الترتيب يحصل الإنتظام في الأفعال البشرية (ابن خلدون 2013: 562).

As you have seen above, Ibn Khaldūn stated that the world of created things comprises pure essences such as the elements of minerals, plants, and animals. All of these things are linked to the authority of God. Accordingly, he suggests that there is a world other than their essences that also includes activities from living humans that occur through their intentions and are linked to the power that God has provided them (Ibn Khaldūn 1980: II, 413-414). He says: what is well arranged and orderly are human actions. On the other hand, the actions of non-human living beings are not well arranged and orderly (Ibn Khaldūn 1980: II, 413-414). In his work, Ibn Khaldūn exemplifies both the process and the connection between thinking and action as follows:

For instance, if a man thinks of bringing into existence a roof to shelter him, he will progress in his mind [from the roof] to the wall supporting the roof, and then to the foundation upon which the wall stands. Here, his thinking will end, and he will then start to work on the foundation, then [move on to] the wall, and then [to] the roof, with which his action will end. This is what is meant by the saying: "The beginning of action is the end of thinking, and the beginning of thinking is the end of action." Thus, human action in the outside world materializes only through thinking about the order of things, since things are based upon each other. [...] Once this order is taken into consideration, human actions proceed in a well-arranged manner (Ibn Khaldūn 1980: II, 414-415).

According to Ibn Khaldūn, *the intangible world of occurrences* (*'ālam al-hawādith*), is the socially constructed level of existence. Since this level is comprised of human actions proceeding from living beings that happen through their intentions, society and its properties emerge at this point. Other than the physical world that we perceive, there is also a socially constructed world. In this socially constructed world, all living beings live in organizations. Some of them, such as ants and bees, are instinctively led to organize themselves and are inspired by God to arrange their societies. On the other hand, human beings organize by choice and they do this by using their will. This is sometimes guided by religion, at times by rationality, and every so often by both. It should be emphasized that Ibn Khaldūn gives legitimacy to arguments and ways of thinking that are both religious and rational when it comes to ordering social and political life, and this provides a very solid conceptual foundation for diversity management and pluralism based on multiplexity. For instance, the state as a governmental organization is socially constructed by human beings. It is, therefore, not a natural phenomenon according to Ibn Khaldūn.

As you will see below, human actions and their consequences, as in the case with *al-'umrā*n and its properties, belong to the level of existence known as *the Iintangible world of occurrences ('ālam al-hawādith)*.

7. The Unseen World (*'Ālam al-Ghayb*)

Ibn Khaldūn continues his ontological system with the world of the angels. The unseen world (*'ālam al-ghayb*) is the highest point of his ontological understanding and the world of angels is a part of it. Ibn Khaldūn describes the world of the angels and its place as follows:

ثم إنا نجد في العوالم على اختلافها آثاراً متنوعةً: ففي عالم الحس آثار من حركة الأفلاك والعناصر، وفي عالم التكوين آثار من حركة النمو والإدراك، تشهد كلها بأن لها مؤثراً مبايناً للأجسام، فهو روحاني ويتصل بالمكونات لوجود اتصال هذه العوالم في وجودها،

ولذلك هو النفس المدركة والمحركة. ولا بد فوقها من وجود آخر يعطيها قوى الإدراك والحركة ويتصل بها أيضاً، وتكون ذواته إدراكا صرفاً وتعقلاً محضاً، وهو عالم الملائكة. فوجب من ذلك أن يكون للنفس استعداد للانسلاخ من البشرية إلى الملكية لتصير بالفعل من جنس الملائكة وقتاً من الأوقات في لمحة من اللمحات، و ذلك بعد أن تكمل ذاتها الروحانية، بالفعل كما نذكره بعد، و يكون لها اتصال بالأفق الذي بعدها شأن الموجودات المترتبة كما قدمناه، فلها في الاتصال جهتا العلو و السفل: و هي متصلة بالبدن من أسفل منها، و مكتسبة به المدارك الحسية التي تستعد بها للحصول على التعقل بالفعل، و متصلة من جهة الأعلى منها بأفق الملائكة و مكتسبة به المدارك العلمية و الغيبية، فإن علم الحوادث موجود في تعقلاتهم من غير زمان، و هذا على ما قدمناه من الترتيب المحكم في الوجود باتصال ذواته و قواه بعضها ببعض (ابن خلدون 2013: 132-131).

In the world of sensual perception there are certain influences of the motions of the spheres and the elements. In the world of creation there are certain influences of the motions of growth and perception. All this is evidence of the fact that there is something that exercises an influence and is different from the bodily substances. This is something spiritual. It is connected with the created things, because *the various worlds must be connected in their existence*. This spiritual thing is the soul, which has perception and causes motion. Above the soul there must exist something else that gives the soul the power of perception and motion, and that is also connected with it. Its essence should be pure perception and absolute intellection. This is the world of the angels (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 195).

According to Ibn Khaldūn, similar to all other orders which exist, the soul is also connected with the stages next to it. The soul is located between these realms. The body, which represents the material world, is connected with the soul and is located below it. Thanks to the body, sense perceptions are acquirable by the soul. And the soul is connected with the world of the angels which represents the unseen world (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 196).

8. Multiplex Human Ontology in Ibn Khaldūn's Thought: The Human Being as Body, Mind and Soul

Similar to other Muslim scholars, Ibn Khaldūn believes that human beings have body, mind and soul. He writes:

ثم إن هذه النفس الإنسانية غائبة عن العيان، وآثارها ظاهرة في البدن فكأنه وجميع أجزائه مجتمعةً ومفترقةً آلات للنفس ولقواها، أما الفاعلة فالبطش باليد والمشي بالرجل والكلام باللسان والحركة الكلية بالبدن متدافعاً. وأما المدركة وإن كانت قوى الإدراك

(مترتبة) ومرتقيةً إلى القوة العليا منها، ومن المفكرة التي يعبر عنها بالناطقة فقوى الحس الظاهرة بآلاته من السمع والبصر وسائرها ترتقي إلى الباطن، وأوله الحس المشترك، وهو قوة تدرك المحسوسات مبصرةً ومسموعةً وملموسةً وغيرها في حالة واحدة، وبذلك فارقت قوة الحس الظاهرة؛ لأن المحسوسات لا تزدحم عليها في الوقت الواحد. ثم يؤديه الحس المشترك إلى الخيال، وهو قوة تمثل الشيء المحسوس في النفس كما هو مجرد عن المواد الخارجة فقط. وآلة هاتين القوتين في تصرفها البطن الأول من الدماغ مقدمة للأولى، ومؤخرة للثانية. ثم يرتقي الخيال إلى الواهمة والحافظة؛ فالواهمة لإدراك المعاني المتعلقة بالشخصيات كعداوة زيد وصداقة عمرو ورحمة الأب وافتراس الذئب. والحافظة لإيداع المدركات كلها متخيلةً وغير متخيلة وهي لها كالخزانة تحفظها لوقت الحاجة إليها. (ابن خلدون 2013: 132)

The human soul cannot be seen, but its influence is apparent in the body. It is as if all (the body's) parts, in combination or separately, were organs of the soul and its powers. The powers of action are touching with the hand, walking with the foot, speaking with the tongue, and the total combined motion with the body. The powers of sensual perception are graded and ascend to the highest power, that is, the power of thinking, for which there exists the term "rational power" (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 196).

For Ibn Khaldūn, the properties of the human being, which consists of body, mind and soul, do not exclude one another. They are parts and parcels of a system which works inclusively in harmony. According to Ibn Khaldūn’s understanding, humans are not to be reduced to any one of these parts, and as a multiplex thinker and scholar he therefore views human beings from a holistic perspective.

9. Multiplex Ontology and the Science of Society (*'Ilm al-'Umrān)*

> *ʿIlm al-ʻumrān* is based on a “…social metaphysics; and it is a kind of ontology in terms of discussing the essential properties of the society. This ontology is different than the ontology that deals with existence from the point of view of existence because of the fact that it examines a socio-historical realm as a unit of analysis that has never been realized before by the metaphysicians (Görgun cited by Sunar-Yaslıçimen 2008: 419).

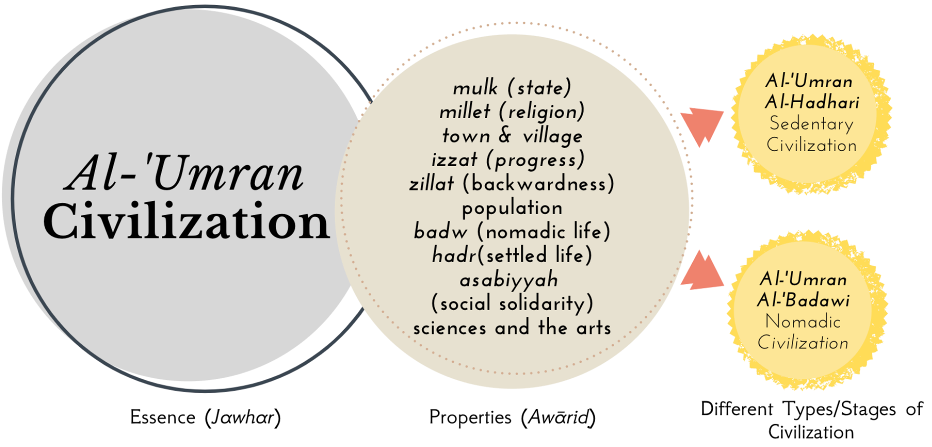

Al-'Umran
Civilization
mulk (state)
millet (religion)
town & village
izzat (progress)
zillat (backwardness)
population
badw (nomadic life)
hadr(settled life)
asabiyyah
(social solidarity)
sciences and the arts
Al-'Umran
Al-Hadhari
Sedentary
Civilization
Al-'Umran
Al-'Badawi
Nomadic
Civilization
Essence (Jawhar)
Properties (Awārid)
Different Types/Stages of Civilization

Figure 12.2: Ibn Khaldūn's theory of society (*al-'umran)*

Ibn Khaldūn accepts traditional metaphysics predicated upon a separation of essence *(jawhar)* and properties *(awāri⍰)*. Ibn Khaldūn believes that all civilizations possess comparable structural characteristics of which he labels as essential properties: *al-'awārid al-dhatiyyah* (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 19). Citation from the *Muqaddimah* below indicates this point:

فأنشأت في التاريخ كتابا، رفعت به عن أحوال الناشئة من الأجيال حجابا، و فصلته في الأخبار و الاعتبار بابا بابا، و أبديت فيه لأولوية الدول و العمران عللا و أسبابا [...] فهذبت مناحيه تهذيبا، و قربته لأفهام العلماء و الخاصة تقريبا، و سلكت في ترتيبه و تبويبه مسلكا غريبا، و اخترعته من بين المناحي مذهبة عجيبا، و طريقة مبتدعة و أسلوبا، و شرحت فيه من أحوال العمران و التمدن، و ما يعرض في الاجتماع الإنساني من الأعراض الذاتية و ما يمتعك بعلل الكوائن و أسبابها، و يعرفك كيف دخل أهل الدول من أبوابها، حتى تنزع من التقليد يدك، و تقف على أحوال ما قبلك من الأيام و الأجيال و ما بعدك (ابن خلدون 2013: 15-16)

In it *(Muqaddimah)* I have expounded, in a manner beneficial to you, the states of ʿ*umrān* and of establishing civilisations, the essential properties emerging in human society, including their causes and effects (Ibn Khaldūn cited in Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 532).

Ibn Khaldūn uses the terms *al-'umrān*, *al-madaniyyah*, *al-ijtimā' al-basharī* and *al-ijtimā' al-insanī* to mean civilization which, for him, corresponds to society. In other words, according to Ibn Khaldūn, if there is a society then, by extension, there is a civilization. Any group of people who are organized as a society are considered civilized regardless of their organization types. These societies may organize themselves as nomads (*badawī*) or sedentary (*hadarī*). The essence (*jawhar*) of *al-'umrān* or civilization does not change. What is changeable is its properties (*awārid*) such as state (*mulk*), religion (*millah*), nomadism (*badw*), sedentariness (*hadr*), social solidarity (*aṣabiyyah*), sciences and so forth.

The subject of a science (*'ilm*) is not the essence (*jawhar*) of civilization but the properties (*awārid*) of civilization which are attached to its essence. Accordingly, the subject of the science of *'umrān* (*'ilm al-umrān*), which was founded by Ibn Khaldūn, is the occurrences that emerge in a civilization (*al-*'umrān). As you can see, *al-'umrān* and its properties belong to the intangible world of occurrences (*'ālam al-hawādith*), which is a socially constructed level of existence (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 19). With reference to its internal meaning, *al-'umrān* is a comprehensive science, which explains the reasons of beings and dissolutions that take place in the world of occurrences.

10. The Dynamic Structure of Society (*al-'Umrān)*

اعلم أنه لما كانت حقيقة التاريخ أنه خبر عن الاجتماع الإنساني الذي هو عمران العالم، وما يعرض لطبيعة ذلك العمران من الأحوال مثل التوحش والتأنس والعصبيات وأصناف التغلبات للبشر بعضهم على بعض، وما ينشأ عن ذلك من المُلْك والدول ومراتبها، وما ينتحله البشر بأعمالهم ومساعيهم من الكسب والمعاش والعلوم والصنائع، وسائر ما يحدث في ذلك العمران بطبيعته من الأحوال (ابن خلدون 2013: 55) .

It should be known that history, in matter of fact, is information about human social organization, which itself is identical with world civilization. It deals with such conditions affecting the nature of civilization as, for instance, savagery and sociability, group feelings, and the different ways by which one group of human beings achieves superiority over another. It deals with royal authority and the dynasties that result (in this manner) and with the various ranks that exist within them. (It further deals) with the different kinds of gainful occupations and ways of making a living, with the sciences and crafts that human beings pursue as part of their activities and efforts, and with all the other institutions that originate in civilization through its very nature (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 71).

The fundamental properties of a civilization as shown above would include the following: state, nation, religion, town or village, progressiveness or backwardness, over-population or under-population, nomadic or settled lifestyles, present or impending, solitude, harmony, social solidarity (*aṣabiyyah*), triumph, hegemony, kingship, authority, profit or loss, subsistence, sciences and the arts. These are the characteristic properties which occur in the essence (*jawhar*), that is to say, in the civilization or the society: *al-'umrān*. The essence of *al-'umrān* does not change while the qualities of properties can change. Ibn Khaldūn pins the concept of *ʿumrān* onto a more political and economic basis. From the political perspective state organizations emerge in a society, but at times those states may fall. Society is sometimes described with concepts such as progress or regress and sometimes with solidarity or individualism. In other words, in a society there can be solidarity (*aṣabiyyah*) but at the same time conflict can characterize the relation between different types of societies (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 532-533).

In short, properties (*'awārid*) occur in society through human actions. Accordingly, depending on these variables or properties, especially economics, *al-'umrān*, which is the base for dwelling, is shaped either as *al-'umrān al-hadārī* (sedentary civilization) or as *al-'umrān al-badawī* (nomadic civilization). In that respect, know that *al-'umrān* has a dynamic structure because its properties are in constant change. That is why the subject of *'ilm al-'umrān* is not static; on the contrary, it is fluid and changeable. Ibn Khaldūn emphasizes this in the following way: in the beginning of state formation the level of solidarity is very strong, but it becomes weaker as the society progresses materially and as prosperity and wealth increases. This demonstrates that in Ibn Khaldūn's view there is a great tension between prosperity, luxury and wealth on the one hand, and morality and solidarity on the other hand. Thus, the higher the level of wealth in a society, the lower the level of solidarity; the higher the level of prosperity, the lower the level of morality. Consequently, writes Ibn Khaldūn, richness makes people feel independent and individualistic. He observes that economic development causes erosion in morality because it brings individualism and search for excessive luxury. Economic development and power causes erosion in solidarity. Ibn Khaldūn believes that all civilizations operate in accordance with the same laws.

Section B.
EPISTEMOLOGY IN IBN KHALDŪN’S WORKS

Ibn Khaldūn believes that reality emanates from the divine world and needs to be perfected through science and knowledge. According to Ibn Khaldūn, there are three categories of knowledge that require different epistemological approaches. These categories are prophetic knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-nabawī*), divinely-inspired knowledge (*al-ma‘rifah al-wahbiyyah*), and acquired knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-kasbī*). He further divides acquired knowledge into two subcategories, namely reported knowledge and rationally acquired knowledge. These categories are not mutually exclusive. They rather complement each other and correspond to different levels of existence.

1. Prophetic Knowledge (*Al-'Ilm Al-Nabawī*)

According to Ibn Khaldūn, sources of knowledge stem from three worlds which are related to his ontological understanding (Bedir 2015: 43). You should be able to decipher his epistemology by looking at Ibn Khaldūn's ontology as his epistemology is derived from his ontology. Ibn Khaldūn says that there are three types of knowledge that correspond to the three levels of existence mentioned above. According to his multiplex epistemology (*marātib al-'ilm*), the highest type of knowledge is prophetic knowledge (*al-'ilm al-nabawī*), which is only accessible to prophets and can be received through divine revelation (*wahy*) alone. Human beings try to understand prophetic knowledge by using a method called *usūl al-fiqh*, the methodology of *fiqh*. The literal meaning of ''*fiqh*'' is understanding.

Since this type of knowledge is revealed, it has the characteristic of coming from Allah's knowledge and is therefore absolute and unchanging. It is not possible for one to come up with another idea at this level. This is what divine revelation is mainly referring to, and the divine realm is its the ontological level.

2. Knowledge Granted by Divine Inspiration (*Al-Ma'rifah al-Wahbiyyah)*

اعلم أن الله سبحانه خلق هذا الإنسان مركباً من جثمان ظاهرٍ، وهيكل محسوسٍ وهو الجسد، ومن لطيفة ربانية أودعه إياها وأركبها مطية بدنه، وهذه اللطيفة مع البدنِ بمنزلة الفارس مع الفرس، والسلطان مع الرعية، تُصَرِّفُ البدن في طوعها وتحركه في إرادتها لا يملك عليها شيئاً، ولا يقدر على مُعاصاتِها طرفةَ عين، لِمَا مَلَّكَهَا الله من أمره، وبثَّ من قُواها فيه، وهي التي يعبَّرُ عنها في الشَّرعِ تارةً بالروح، وتارةً بالقلب، وتارةً بالعقل، وتارةً بالنفس، وإن كانت هذه الألفاظ مشتركة بينها وبين مدلولاتٍ أخرى، وإن أردت َمزيد شرحٍ لهذا فعليك بكتاب الغزالي (ابن خلدون 2013: 55).

Know that God (glory be to Him) created man of two substances: the first is a visible corporeal mass with a tangible frame, namely the body (*jasad*); and the second, a subtle reality (*latifa rabbaniyya*) that He bestowed upon man and deposited in the body, its seat. The subtle reality is to the body what the horseman is to his mount or the sultan to his people. The body yields to its authority and submits to its will. The body has no power over the subtle reality and is incapable, even for one moment, of rebelling against it since God gave the subtle reality mastery and diffused in it power over the body. The Law refers to it as spirit, heart, intellect or soul. At the same time, these terms denote other concepts; if the reader wishes to know more concerning this point, he can consult Ghazālī's book (Ibn Khaldūn 2017: 58).

Ibn Khaldūn discusses knowledge granted by divine inspiration extensively in his book *Shifa al-sā`il* as well as in one of the sections of *The Muqaddimah* on *tasawwuf*. This kind of knowledge is given to the saints and Sufis as it represents the spiritual way of life in Islam (*tasawwuf*). When it comes to the divinely-inspired knowledge, the active faculty is the human heart. This kind of knowledge is not gained through rational processes in the mind but is granted by Allah to pious people as a reward. In the Qur'an this kind of knowledge is referred to in the following manner:
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ (Qur'an, 2:282).

The thinking faculty of which all human beings possess is the heart and this is where reason is located. Knowledge is either acquired by the heart through rational thinking, or it is directly inspired or gifted in the heart by Allah. The Qur'an clearly states that people reason with their hearts: " قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا" which means *"hearts by which they reason"* (Qur'an, 22:46).

Divinely-gifted knowledge emerges in the heart in the following manner: first the heart prepares itself for divinely-gifted knowledge through purification (*tazkiyah*). Then it becomes receptive to the flows of knowledge emanating from the divine realm. Finally, the eye of the heart is unveiled (*kashf)* which allows the person to see with the eye of the heart the unseen world to the extent that Allah allows.

According to Imam al-Ghazālī, when spiritual unveiling occurs in the heart, one can feel it. The spiritual tools of knowledge, commonly referred to by Sufis as the subtle faculties (*laṭā'if),* develop and become activated through pious practices and by persistently following the internal and external *Sunnah* of the prophet Muhammad. Thinking is a way in which one can develop his or her intellectual or rational abilities and faculties alone, but not the spiritual ones. Therefore, there is a special way of living in order to be qualified to acquire this special kind of knowledge.

Concerning the nature of the knowledge the Sufis gain through *kashf*, Ibn Khaldūn states the following:

ثم هذه اللَّطيفة الربّانيّة أبرزَها الله من عالَم الأمر، وذاتُها لم تستكمل بعد، وجعلها مُيسَّرةً بجبلتها للكمال. قال صلى الله عليه وسلم : (كلُّ مولودٍ يولَدُ على الفِطرَة، فأبَواهُ يُهوِّدانِه أو يُمَجِّسانهِ أو يُنصِّرانه)، وإنما أبرزت إلى هذا العالم لتكتسب فيه كمالها الذي لها بحسب ذاتها ومقتضى طبعها، ولما كانت ذاتها بأصل نشأتها من العالم الروحاني الذي ذواته عالمة بالفعل لا تفتقر إلى اكتساب، كان كمال ذاتها هي بحصول العلم والمعرفة لها بحقائق الموجودات، حتى تتصور عالمها وتعرف صفات موجده وآثاره (ابن خلدون 2013: 56).

> Allah has created the subtle reality. It originated in the World of Divine Command and its essence was still incomplete when Allah granted it an innate disposition that aspires to perfection…The reality was then brought into this world in order to obtain the perfection that befits its essence and conforms to its nature. Since this subtle reality emanates from the Spiritual World (*al-ālam al-ruhāni*), wherein knowledge is intrinsic and does not need to be acquired by the senses, the perfection of the subtle reality's essence lies in its acquisition of the science and knowledge related to the reality of existents (*mawjudāt*). With this knowledge, the reality is then able to envision its

> own original world and to know the Attributes of its Creator and His effect (Ibn Khaldūn 2017: 20).

This statement shows that Ibn Khaldūn believes, as do many other Muslim scholars, that knowledge gained through divine inspiration (*al-ma'rifah al-wahbiyyah*) takes place in the heart or the subtle reality, which is both its location and mirror.

اعلم أن هذه اللطيفة لما أركبت مطية البدن وثبت قواها فيه للاستكمال بحياتها الدنيا، ثم كانت من عالم الأمر والملكوت، تعيّنت لها جهتان تكتسبُ منها كمالها بالعلوم والمعارف إحداهما جهةُ هذه الحياة الدنيا التي خلِقت لها، وجميعُ ما فيها مسخّر لها، والأخرى جهة عالَمها الذي نشأتُها منه، وذاتُها من طبيعة ذواته، فجهة الحياة الدنيا والعالَمُ الأسفل تُكتسب منها العلوم والمعارف ببسط الحواس الظاهرة على المدركات، بانتزاع صوَرها في الخيال، ثم تجريد المعني المعقولة منها، ثم تصرُّفُ الفكر فيها بالتركيب والتحليل ونظمِ الأقيسة حتى يفصَلَ مطلوبها الذي تتوجه إليه، ويسمى هذا العلم كسبياً، وجهة العالَم الأعلى وعالم الأمر وعالم الروحانيات تكتسب منه بتصفيتها عن كدوراتِ الرذائل وتخليصها من ظلْمِ البشرية، فتتعرض بذلك لنفحات الرحمة ومهب الكمال والسعادة، فتلوح أنوار العلم والمعرفة في القلب (ابن خلدون 2013: 59).

If we draw an analogy between the heart, which is the means of receiving knowledge given by divine inspiration (*al-ma'rifah al-wahbiyyah*), and the senses, which is the means of acquiring empirical sciences, we find that the major difference lies in the idea that knowledge in the first case is directly revealed to the heart and is not acquired through external means. However, in the case of the empirical sciences, knowledge is acquired through the senses, and the senses constitute a medium between what is perceived and where it is located.

Ibn Khaldūn states that if the subtle reality that is in us reaches the level of spiritual unveiling (*kashf*) through purification and spiritual struggle, knowledge is granted according to different levels, and these vary with the degree of purification and cleansing the soul has achieved. These levels are called *muhadarah*, *mukashafa*, and *mushahadah*.

اعلم أن هذه اللطيفة الربانية التي فينا إذا حصل لها بالتصفية والمجاهدة والعلم الإلهامي كما قدمناه، ويسمّى كشفاً واطّلاعاً، فهو ذو مراتب تختلف وتتفاوَت بتفاوت الصفا والتخلص من الكَدُرات، فمبدؤها المحاضرةُ، وهي آخر مراتب الحجابِ وأول مراتب الكشف، ثم بعدها المكاشفة ثم بعدها المشاهدةُ، ولا تكون إلاّ إذا امَّحت آثار الإنية (ابن خلدون 1996: 69).

a. *Muhadara* (the state of presence with Allah): it is a state where the heart is overwhelmed with the power of remembrance but is still behind the veil.

b. *Mukashafa* (spiritual unveiling): it is the state where the heart starts receiving breezes of divine knowledge and where there is no veil that would prevent ascribing an attribute to the Unseen (*ghayb*).

c. *Mushahada* (Witnessing): it is a state where the traces of individual existence are erased. “Witnessing” denotes presence with the Truth without any trace of doubt left (*hudūr al-Haqq min ghayr baqai tuhma*).

The higher the level the Sufi reaches, the more certain the knowledge he or she receives.

Imam al-Ghazālī explains this type of knowledge as follows. He says that, in his time, when one reads astronomy it is possible to ascertain that previous astronomers were right in their calculations. Carrying out such calculations requires that one lives for a thousand years so as to be able to fully observe the heavenly bodies when they make their revolutions. So, is it that a man who lived for about seventy years when in fact he should have lived for one thousand years is able to arrive at the correct calculations? It is because of his inspiration. Allah granted him this type of knowledge as a reward for his hard work. This kind of knowledge applies not only to the natural sciences but also to the spiritual sciences.

3. Acquired Knowledge (*Al-'Ilm Al-Kasbī*)

Acquired knowledge (*al-'ilm al-kasbī*) or scientific knowledge is another type of knowledge that Ibn Khaldūn mentions in his taxonomy of knowledge. An example of this level of knowledge is the discipline of history which uses the scientific method. Epistemologically speaking, philosophical, scientific and, in general, academic knowledge falls under the category of acquired knowledge as it is gained through research and reasoning. It is also supported by empirical and rational arguments and evidence. Yet Muslim philosophers, although they rely on rationality, are not reductionist rationalists because they also acknowledge spiritual experience as a source of knowledge to reach a complete conception of reality.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, there are four steps to attaining acquired knowledge. Some of these four steps are mentioned by Aristotle as well as Ibn Sina and al-Ghazālī. The starting point of this epistemology is sense perception. Human beings perceive objects through their sense perceptions (*al-hawās al-salīma*). Next, perception is sent to the faculty of imagination in the brain. Then, intelligible knowledge is abstracted through imagination. Imagination constructs a picture of what you are observing without you realizing it. This is what Ibn Khaldūn calls *intelligible meanings* or form. When one starts thinking about them, they turn into concepts. In order to produce knowledge about an object, one needs these concepts because without concepts the mind can not process thinking. Therefore, one needs to explain how concepts are produced in the mind. In the final step, we combine the concepts to formulate propositions and arguments. These arguments are used by the mind to produce and reproduce knowledge. This is what Ibn Khaldūn calls (*al-'ilm al-kasbī*). This type of knowledge ensures regularity in human behaviour which leads to *al-'umrān* or civilization.

Acquired knowledge may be based on rational thinking and empirical research, or on sacred scriptures which are embodiments of revealed knowledge. We will now discuss this below in more detail.

Acquired knowledge is either revealed or rational. According to Ibn Khaldūn, sciences and disciplines emerge in sedentary civilization *(al-'umrān al-hadārī)*. There can be different sciences in different civilizations due to different worldviews. For example, Rosenthal emphasizes this by saying, *the concept of 'ilm which is weakly translated as knowledge, has been operative as a determinant of Muslim civilization in all its aspects to the same extent* (Rosenthal 2007: 2). According to Ibn Khaldūn's classification of knowledge, knowledge with which people concern themselves in cities and which they acquire and pass on through instruction, is of two kinds: one is acquired through pure reasoning (*'aqlī*), and the other is revealed (*naqlī*) to humans in

. . . in short, there is only one order, but it is revealed to man in two ways: through divine revelation and through natural reason (Mahdi 1971: 31)

sacred sources. This is basically an epistemological categorization based on the sources of knowledge.

اعلم أن العلوم التي يخوض فيها البشر و يتداولونها في الأمصار تحصيلاً و تعليماً هي على صنفين: صنف طبيعي للإنسان يهتدي إليه بفكره، و صنف نقلي يأخذه عمن وضعه. و الأول هي العلوم الحكمية الفلسفية و هي التي يمكن أن يقف عليها الإنسان بطبيعة فكره، و يهتدي بمداركه البشرية إلى موضوعاتها و مسائلها و أنحاء براهينها و وجوه تعليمها، حتى يقفه نظره، و يحثه على الصواب من الخطأ فيها من حيث هو إنسان ذو فكر. و الثاني هي العلوم النقلية الوضعية، و هي كلها مستندة إلى الخبر عن الواضع الشرعي. و لا مجال فيها للعقل، إلا في إلحاق الفروع من مسائلها بالأصول، لأن الجزئيات الحادثة المتعاقبة لا تندرج تحت النقل الكلي بمجرد وضعه فتحتاج إلى الإلحاق بوجه قياسي. إلا أن هذا القياس يتفرع عن الخبر بثبوت الحكم في الأصل و هو نقلي فرجع هذا القياس إلى النقل لتفرعه (ابن خلدون 2013: 525).

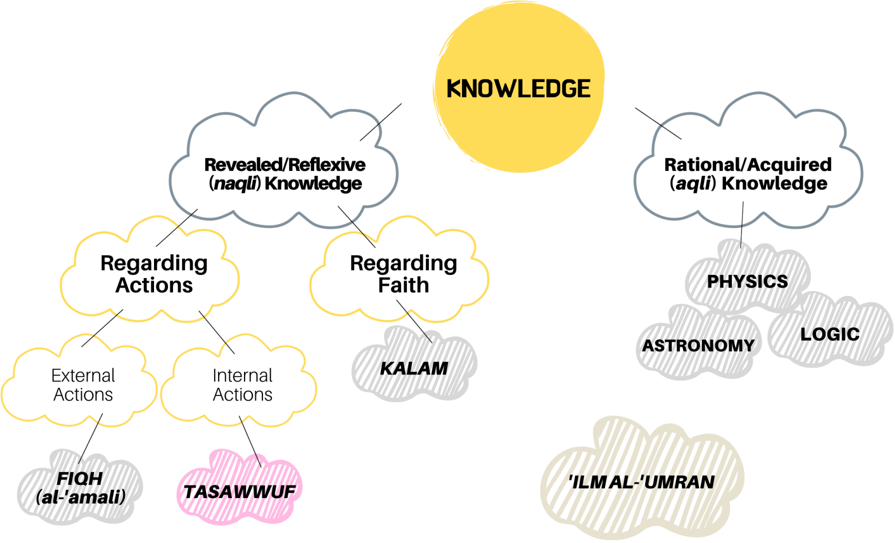

KNOWLEDGE
Revealed/Reflexive (naqli) Knowledge
Rational/Acquired (aqli) Knowledge
Regarding Actions
Regarding Faith
External Actions
Internal Actions
KALAM
FIQH (al-'amali)
TASAWWUF
PHYSICS
ASTRONOMY
LOGIC
'ILM AL-'UMRAN

Figure 12.3: Classification of knowledge according to Ibn Khaldūn

4. Revealed Knowledge *(Al-'Ilm Al-Naqlī)*

Ibn Khaldūn says that revealed (*naqlī*) knowledge is comprised of traditional and conventional Islamic disciplines such as *hadith* and *tafsir*. All of them depend on information that is based on the authority of religious law. There is no place for the intellect in them except in the interpretation of the texts. In addition, the intellect may be used to relate them to practical problems by applying the methodology of fiqh (Ibn Khaldūn 1980: II, 436). According to Ibn Khaldūn, disciplines relying on revealed (*naqlī*) knowledge such as *fiqh*, *tafsir* and *hadith* are peculiar to Muslims as they do not exist in other civilizations. Revealed knowledge comes from Allah through the prophet Muhammad. In Islamic civilization, the specific effort exerted for understanding revealed knowledge is *fiqh*, which denotes understanding. *Fiqh* is an important field as it represents an intrinsic feature of Islamic civilization. It is a discipline that works with a multiplicity of values, or a multiplicity of reasons, and it is moreover based on an understanding of multiplex existence, method, truth, meaning and values.

What is *Fiqh*?

Fiqh as an Intrinsic Attribute of Islamic Civilization

Fiqh is the Islamic civilization's tool for solving social, economic, political and legal problems at the level of individuals (the micro level) and the level of groups (macro level). Within Islamic civilization, we may consider Fiqh as the understanding of society and of normative (moral and legal) order: at the conceptual level, it directs people's view — as individuals and groups — regarding their society, phenomena, relations and institutions, while at the level of practice, it comprehensively deals with human behavior in the public sphere (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 83).

Fiqh is a science that works with a multiplicity of values or a multiplicity of reasons, as it is based on an understanding of multiplex existence, method, truth, meaning and values (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 83). Fiqh is an intrinsic attribute of Islamic civilization. If Islamic civilization experiences a crisis, Fiqh experiences a crisis as well. Similarly, if Fiqh experiences a crisis, Islamic civilization experiences a crisis in turn. The superficial understanding of Fiqh today is a consequence of this crisis (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 86).

The methodology of Fiqh (Usūl al-Fiqh) is the method of interpretation that all Islamic sciences employ. In Islamic history, the discourses of hadith, Quran and the humanities were interpreted with the aid of usūl al-Fiqh. Instead of Muslims developing a separate methodology for each text, usūl-al fiqh provided a unified methodology for the sciences (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 86).

The Subject of Fiqh

The subject of Fiqh is ʻamal, which means action and behavior. Fiqh is a science that Muslims consult in order to analyze and understand human behavior and relations systematically. ʻAmal is the product not only of individuals but also of groups and institutions (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 61).

Similarly, in the West, ʻamal is the subject of the social sciences and Western thought resorts to it in order to analyze human behavior in a systematic way so as to understand it. The subject matter of fiqh and the social sciences are the same. In defining ʻamal, one finds different approaches in fiqh and the social sciences, for both the Western and Islamic civilizations view the human being differently. At the basis of the difference in their conceptions of the human being lies the difference between Western and Islamic understandings of existence, knowledge and values. Fiqh is based on a multiplex system of thought — it conceptualizes existence, knowledge, truth and values in a multiplex way (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 87).

Action (ʻamal) According to Fiqh

Fiqh defines the human being as a multiplex being. Man has a zāhir (apparent) and a bātin (hidden) side. The zahir is observable, but the batin cannot be observed. The zahir concerns the body and its actions, whereas the batin concerns the heart and its actions. The most important action of the heart is niyyah (intention), which is the spirit of the ʻamal. The ʻamal of the body is dependent on the heart — it cannot take place without it. However, bātin amal, that is the ʻamal of the heart, is not dependent on the body. The body of the person has been simply entrusted to him for the duration of his mortal existence (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 91).

The Branches of Fiqh

Because the ʻamal is divided into zahir and batin actions, Fiqh too is divided into two, namely outer fiqh (fiqh al-zahir) and inner fiqh (fiqh al-bātin). The subject of fiqh al-zahir is called ʻamaliyyatʼ (observable acts), whereas the subject of fiqh al-bātin has been termed ʻwijdaniyyatʼ (internal acts). ʻAmaliyyat can be known through the sense, but wijdaniyyat cannot be known in the same way (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 91).

Fiqh al-zahir and fiqh al-bātin are grounded in 'aqāid and kalām, which is what Abu Hanifa calls al-fiqh al-akbar (the greatest fiqh). The importance of al-fiqh al-akbar stems from the fact that it speaks about faith which is a prerequisite for 'amal. For if 'aqida (creed) is not sound, then the 'amal is void. Faith includes the subjects of existence, knowledge and values. These subjects form the theoretical and conceptual bases of the discussions on normative subjects (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 92).

Usūl-al Fiqh is the common method and science of interpretation for Islamic thought and sciences. The interpretation of the Quran and Hadith is carried out through usūl al-fiqh as well. Usūl al-fiqh, is basically a method of ijtihad, or interpretation. However, beside ijtihad, the methods of fatwa and qada are included in usūl al-fiqh (Şentürk (Forthcoming): 92).

5. Rationally Acquired Knowledge (*Al-'Ilm Al-'Aqlī*)

This kind of knowledge comprises the philosophical disciplines. People gain it through thinking by using their mental faculties. According to Ibn Khaldūn this is how human beings can gain rationally acquired (*'aqlī*) knowledge. With the help of human perceptions, the human being is made aware of the distinction between what is correct and what is wrong by his own speculation and research (Ibn Khaldūn 1980: II, 436). It is possible to group certain disciplines such as Physics, Philosophy, Ethics and *'Ilm al-'Umrān* under the title of rationally acquired (*'aqlī*) knowledge.

6. Relation between Revealed Knowledge and *'Ilm al-'Umrān*

According to Ibn Khaldūn, society is not something coincidental. For him, there is a strong interdependence between different aspects of the society. Accordingly, politics, religion, economy, military and culture have strong ties especially in terms of which shapes the other reciprocally (Bali cited in Sunar-Yasliçimen 2008: 424). Since society is not a coincidental order, according to Ibn Khaldūn, it depends on the will of Allah. The course of history cannot continue against the Will of Allah. This Will echoes on to society either directly or indirectly. Allah shapes history and societies directly by sending prophets (Sunar-Yaslıçimen 2008: 424).

According to Ibn Khaldūn there are three aspects regarding a civilization.

> 1. Conditions attached to the essence of civilization which therefore becomes part of its nature.
>
> 2. Things comprising the properties of civilization which cannot be accepted as static.
>
> 3. The things which cannot occur in a civilization (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 77).

In light of Ibn Khaldūn's general outlook about civilizations, religion is something possible rather than natural and essential. It is a mercy by Allah upon His servants. You will notice that in history there were societies without religion (Sunar-Yaslıçimen 2008: 424).

7. Regularities Created by Allah in the Physical World

> A hidden pitfall in historiography is disregard for the fact that conditions within the nations and races change with the change of periods and the passing of days. This is a sore affliction and is deeply hidden, becoming noticeable only after a long time, so that rarely do more than a few individuals become aware of it. This is as follows. The condition of the world and of nations, their customs and sects, does not persist in the same form or in a constant manner. There are differences according to days and periods, and changes from one condition to another. This is the case with individuals, times, and cities, and, in the same manner, it happens in connection with regions and districts, periods and dynasties. "This is how God formerly proceeded with His servants (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 56-57).

Ibn Khaldūn conceptualized civilization as a unit of analysis at the macro level and made it into an independent discipline. Historical research led him to the conclusion that under similar circumstances civilizations displayed similar behavior. There are regularities and patterns in human societies which we can be observed and based on those regularities we can reach certain general statements. And we can use those statements to analyze society and the development of human history.

In western academia these regularities and patterns are named as social laws. In Islamic civilization there is a specific term which defines the same phenomena in a multiplex way: ''sunnatullah''. This term signifies the unchangeable laws of social phenomena which indicates Allah's Will of creation. As you have seen above in the *Muqaddimah,* Ibn Khaldūn also emphasizes this by stating *"This is how Allah formerly proceeded with His servants."* (Qur’an, 40:85). Allah’s Will which is inherent throughout the course of history, can be understood by grasping the order of both worlds: the material world and the non-material world (the world of occurrences). Accordingly, at this point, *’ilm al-umran* appears as a science for understanding these regularities as *sunnetullah*, which is created by Allah (Sunar-Yaslıçimen 2008: 424).

Example: Narrated Anas bin Malik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ: The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had a she-camel called Al-`Adba' and it was too fast to surpass in speed. There came a bedouin riding a camel of his, and that camel outstripped it (i.e., Al-`Adba'). That result was hard on the Muslims who said sorrowfully, ‘’ Al-`Adba' has been outstripped.’’ Allah’s Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "It is incumbent upon Allah that nothing would be raised high in this world except that He lowers or puts it down.’’ (Al Bukhari 1997: XIII, 275).

:6501

حدَّثنا مَالِكُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ: حدَّثنا زُهَيْرٌ: حدَّثنا حُمَيْدٌ, عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَاقَةٌ.
قَالَ: وَحَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدٌ: أخبَرَنا الْفَزَارِيُّ وَأَبُو خَالِدٍ الأَحْمَرُ، عَنْ حُمَيْدٍ الطَّوِيلِ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: كَانَتْ نَاقَةٌ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تُسَمَّى الْعَضْبَاءَ، وَكَانَتْ لَا تُسْبَقُ، فَجَاءَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ عَلَى قَعُودٍ لَهُ فَسَبَقَهَا، فَاشْتَدَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَقَالُوا: سُبِقَتِ
الْعَضْبَاءُ, فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «إِنَّ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ لَا يَرْفَعَ شَيْئًا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا وَضَعَه.

(Al Bukhari 1997: XIII, 275).

8. Ibn Khaldūn's Methodology

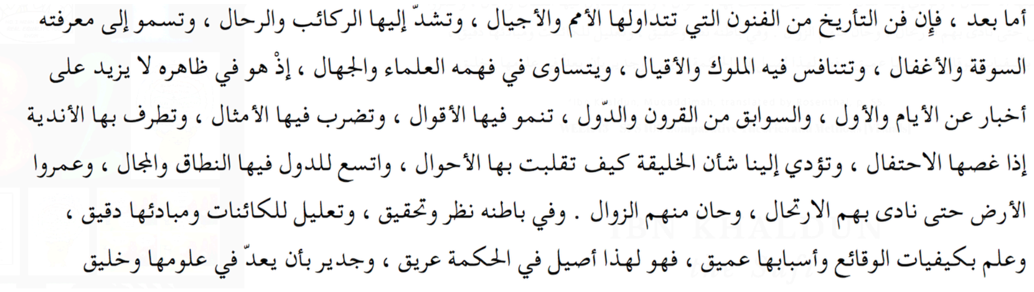
Ibn Khaldūn conceptualized civilization in a way to make it useful as a unit of analysis at the macro level and made it into a discipline in its own right. His research led him to the conclusion that under similar circumstances civilizations displayed similar behavior. Ibn Khaldūn is a fiqh scholar of the Maliki School and his view on history and civilization is closely connected to the fiqh education he received. For a greater part of his life Ibn Khaldūn earned a living by giving lectures on fiqh at prominent educational establishments of his time including al-Azhar and also acting as a Maliki judge and chief judge. It is possible to see that Ibn Khaldūn was very much informed by his fiqh background.

Fiqh deals with human behavior. It differentiates between the *zāhir* (external) and *bātin* (internal) dimensions of behavior and social phenomena. This is an ontological, epistemological and methodological distinction. *Fiqh* accepts that all action is both *zāhiri* and *bātini*, with both an external and an internal dimension. For instance, intention is part of the *bātin* (internal) aspect of action. Ibn Khaldūn employs many methods that are borrowed from the methodology of *fiqh* in the discipline of *'umrān*. The most important of these is the method of analogy (*qiyās)*. Ibn Khaldūn argues that unobservable phenomena should be compared to observable phenomena (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 529-530).

Accordingly, he believes that history too has two levels: the external level *(zāhir)* and the internal level *(bātin)*. The external level of history is what we see on the surface of historical events, it is simply news and reporting. People usually mean this aspect when they talk about history. Ibn Khaldūn says:

> HISTORY is a discipline widely cultivated among nations and races. It iseagerly sought after. The men in the street, the ordinary people, aspire to know it. Kings and leaders vie for it. Both the learned and the ignorant are able to understand it. For on the surface history is no more than information about political events, dynasties, andoccurrences of the remote past, elegantly presented and spiced with proverbs. Itserves to entertain large, crowded gatherings and brings to us an understanding of human affairs. (It shows) how changing conditions affected (human affairs), how certain dynasties came to occupy an ever wider space in the world, and how they settled the earth until they heard the call and their time was up.
>
> The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins

> of existingthings, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. (History,) therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of (philosophy). (Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*)



أما بعد ، فإن فن التأريخ من الفنون التي تتداولها الأمم والأجيال ، وتشدّ إليها الركائب والرحال ، وتسمو إلى معرفته
السوقة والأغفال ، وتتنافس فيه الملوك والأقيال ، ويتساوى في فهمه العلماء والجهال ، إذْ هو في ظاهره لا يزيد على
أخبار عن الأيام والأول ، والسوابق من القرون والدّول ، تنمو فيها الأقوال ، وتضرب فيها الأمثال ، وتطرف بها الأندية
إذا غصها الاحتفال ، وتؤدي إلينا شأن الخليقة كيف تقلبت بها الأحوال ، واتسع للدول فيها النطاق والمجال ، وعمروا
الأرض حتى نادى بهم الارتحال ، وحان منهم الزوال . وفي باطنه نظر وتحقيق ، وتعليل للكائنات ومبادئها دقيق ،
وعلم بكيفيات الوقائع وأسبابها عميق ، فهو لهذا أصيل في الحكمة عريق ، وجدير بأن يعدّ في علومها وخليق

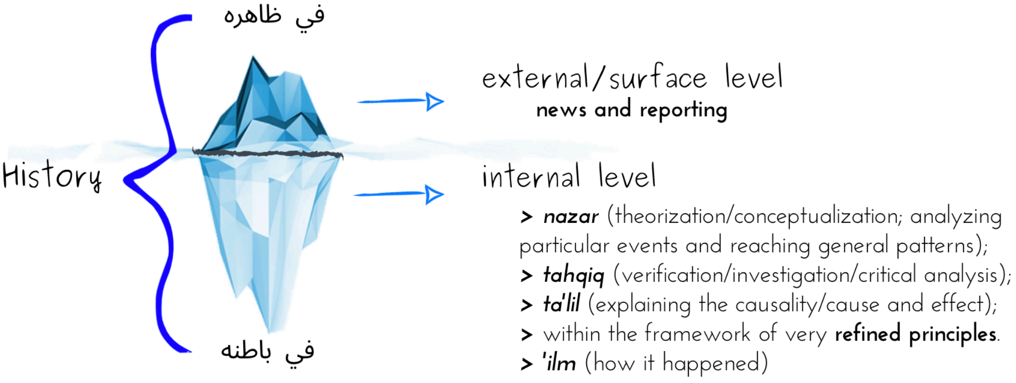

في ظاهره
History
في باطنه
external/surface level
news and reporting
internal level
> nazar (theorization/conceptualization; analyzing particular events and reaching general patterns);
> tahqiq (verification/investigation/critical analysis);
> ta'lil (explaining the causality/cause and effect);
> within the framework of very refined principles.
> 'ilm (how it happened)

Figure 12.4: Two levels of history according to Ibn Khaldūn

He says that this is not what the science of history is all about. Accordingly, he says that history has also an internal aspect that requires methods such as, *nazar*, *ta'lil*, *tahqiq* and *'ilm*.

Below you will learn the meanings of these concepts.

1. *Nazar: nazar* means theorizing through conceptualization and analysis with the purpose of discovering general patterns in history and society. It requires moving from particular events to a general law by discovering repeated patterns. Knowledge about particular events can help us only to report and narrate them, however, this would only be narration. Without theorization, a discipline can not be

called science. According to Ibn Khaldūn and his contemporary scholars, the precondition for a discipline to be called science is theorization and discovery of universal patterns in the subject under study.

2. *Ta'līl* refers to causal explanation. It provides an answer to why a particular event or pattern takes place in history and society. Discovering the causes of events may help to reproduce or prevent their recurrence. Ibn Haldun thinks that causation is very important to history also and that we should try to understand it, and when we understand it we can explain certain events much better allowing you to control the direction that a society is to follow.

3. *Tahqīq* refers to reaching the truth of the subject under study through verification of reports and the inherited knowledge about it. The opposite of *tahqiq* is *taqlid* which means imitation of former authorities and accepting their reports without verification. In Ibn Khaldūn's time, the purpose of Islamic education and academic study was accepted to be elevating students from the level of *taqlid* to the level of *tahqiq* in philosophy and theology (*kalām*), *fiqh* and *tasawwuf*. Each discipline had its own different method of verification. Verification in philosophy and *theology* is through critical examination of the rational evidence on which an argument is based. In *furu' al-fiqh,* it is through critical scrutiny of rational and scriptural evidence on which a norm (*hukm)* is based. In *tasawwuf* it is through confirmation of knowledge with personal spiritual experience to reach higher levels of certainty of knowledge. Here Ibn Khaldūn reflects the approach which is commonly accepted in his time by including *tahqiq* as a method in the study of history and society so that the discipline he is establishing would be qualified to be called a science.

4. *'Ilm* in this context refers to the search for knowledge of universals. Knowledge about particular events is not called *'ilm*. *'Ilm* is the outcome of theorization by moving from data about particulars to universal laws.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, when these four methods are applied they elevate history from the level of mere narration to the level of a proper science. Otherwise, history remains only as a collection of reports, which Ibn Khaldūn calls *the external level of history*.

9. Ibn Khaldūn's *'Ilm al-Umrān*

و إذا كان ذلك فالقانون في تمييز الحق من الباطل في الأخبار بالإمكان و الاستحالة أن ننظر في الاجتماع البشري الذي هو العمران و نميز ما يلحقه من الأحوال لذاته و بمقتضى طبعه و ما يكون عارضاً لا يعتد به و ما لا يمكن أن يعرض له و إذا فعلنا ذلك كان ذلك لنا قانوناً في تمييز الحق من الباطل في الأخبار و الصدق من الكذب بوجه برهاني لا مدخل للشك فيه و حينئذ فإذا سمعنا عن شيىء من الأحوال الواقعة في العمران علمنا ما نحكم بقبوله مما نحكم بتزييفه و كان ذلك لنا معياراً صحيحاً يتحرى به المؤرخون طريق الصدق و الصواب فيما ينقلونه و هذا هو غرض هذا الكتاب الأول من تأليفنا و كأن هذا علم مستقل بنفسه فإنه ذو موضوع و هو العمران البشري و الاجتماع الإنساني و ذو مسائل و هي بيان ما يلحقه من العوارض و الأحوال لذاته واحدة بعد أخرى و هذا شأن كل علم من العلوم وضعياً كان أو عقلياً (ابن خلدون 2013: 58).

> (...) The normative method for distinguishing right from wrong in historical information on the grounds of (inherent) possibility or absurdity, is to investigate human social organization, which is identical with civilization. We must distinguish the conditions that attach themselves to the essence of civilization as required by its very nature; the things that are properties (of civilization) and cannot be counted on; and the things that cannot possibly attach themselves to it. If we do that, we shall have a normative method for distinguishing right from wrong and truth from falsehood in historical information by means of a logical demonstration that admits of no doubts. Then whenever we hear about certain conditions occurring in civilization, we shall know what to accept and what to declare spurious. We shall have a sound yardstick with the help of which historians may find the path of truth and correctness where their reports are concerned. Such is the purpose of this first book of our work. (The subject) is in a way an independent science. (This science) has its own peculiar object-that is, human civilization and social organization. It also has its own peculiar problems, that is, explaining the conditions that attach themselves to the essence of civilization, one

> after the other. Thus, the situation is the same with this science as it is with any other science, whether it be a conventional or an intellectual one'' (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 77).

Before Ibn Khaldūn, philosophers approached *'ilm al-'umrān* in terms of dealing with a similar issue. However, they could not form it as an independent science. *Al-'umrān*'s principles and techniques are different from those of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), Islamic jurisprudence, rhetoric and politics of the state (*al-siyāsah al-madanīyah*). This 'science' is original for both its subject matter and its techniques and values, according to Ibn Khaldūn.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, we need a particular science called *'ilm al-'umrān* or the science of civilization to explain society and its characteristics. The word *'umrān* implies that there is an explainable reason for every single social phenomenon taking place in *al-'umrān*. In addition, these reasons have specific aspects that can be understood. From one aspect, the nature of social reality resembles the nature of material substance. As you have learned above, the topic of *'ilm al-'umrān* is, therefore, to examine the properties and the nature of *'umrān* (Sunar-Yaslıçimen 2008: 419).

9.1. *Al-'umrān: Badw-hadr-aṣabiyyah-riyāsah-mulk*

إعلم أنه لما كانت حقيقة التاريخ أنه خبر عن الاجتماع الانساني الذي هو عمران العالم و ما يعرض لطبيعة ذلك العمران من الأحوال مثل التوحش و التأنس و العصبيات و أصناف التغلبات للبشر بعضهم على بعض و ما ينشأ عن ذلك من الملك و الدول و مراتبها و ما ينتحله البشر بأعمالهم و مساعيهم من الكسب و المعاش والعلوم و الصنائع و سائر ما يحدث من ذلك العمران بطبيعته من الأحوال (ابن خلدون 2013: 55).

> There are three fundamental reasons, Ibn Khaldūn argues, for humans to necessarily have a social life: need for nourishment, security and companionship. These needs can only be met by living in society. Civilization is thus imperative insofar as it accommodates for these three essentials. Humans detached from leading a social life cannot satisfy these needs through any other means, hence the actual impossibility of Ibn Tufayl's fantasy *Hayy ibn Yaqzān* or of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. A mighty

> ruler or state who establishes the rule of law to obviate social conflict is incumbent upon human beings to maintain social order. Otherwise people would annihilate one another through force. However, the past for Ibn Khaldūn demonstrates that it is not of historical necessity that a ruler be a prophet, or the administration be based on divine revelation because societies without a prophet or divine law have existed in bygone periods (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 12).

According to Ibn Khaldūn, humans must live together and settle together in cities and hamlets for companionship and fulfillment of human requirements as a consequence of human beings' natural willingness to cooperate in order to live. That is basically what Ibn Khaldūn calls *’umrān*. In his work, Ibn Khaldūn remarks on *'umrān* (civilization), urbanization, and human social organization's essential properties in a manner that explains to the reader how and why things are as they are (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 84).

Ibn Khaldūn suggests, *'umrān* (civilization) may be either desert (bedouin) culture as discovered in remote areas and hills, in villages, waste areas and on the edges of deserts. Or it may be a sedentary (*haḍārī*) civilization as discovered in towns, villages, towns, and small groups which serve the objective of wall protection and fortification. In all these distinct circumstances, in so far as it is a social organization, there are things that essentially influence civilization (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 84-85).

Ibn Khaldūn says that, *aṣabiyyah* (social solidarity) is a motive that guarantees security and enables mutual defense. He also says that, according to their nature, in every social organization, human beings need someone to behave as a restraining force and mediator to prevent members from (fighting) with each other. This individual in the issue of social solidarity must necessarily have superiority over the others. If not, this authority could not materialize for exercising a restraining impact. This superiority is royal authority (*mulk*). It is more than leadership (*riyasah*). Leadership implies being a chief and obeying the leader, but he does not have the authority to force others to acknowledge his rulings. Royal authority (*mulk*) implies the power to rule by force and superiority (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 284).

Key Words

al-'umrān:	Ibn Khaldūn uses the terms; *al-'umrān*, *madanīyya*, *al-ijtimā’ al-basharī* and *al-ijtimā’ al-insanī* to mean civilization, and according to Ibn Khaldūn, civilization means society. The opening chapter of the first book pertains to anthropic *ʿumrān* in general. Here prevail some premises (*muqaddemāt*), first of which is: It is of necessity for humans to live communally. *Hukemā* (philosophers) articulate this as such: Humans are naturally predisposed to sociality. That is, humans cherish an absolute need to society (‘*ijtimā’*), which in their terminology corresponds to *madaniyyah*, which in turn denotes *ʿumrān''* (Ibn Khaldūn cited in Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 526). The excerpt illustrates Ibn Khaldūn’s emphasis towards construing *ʿumrān*, *madanīyya* and *‘ijtimā’* as cognates.
al-'umrān al-badawī:	nomadic civilization or society
al-umrān al-haḍārī:	sedentary civilization or society
‘ilm al-'umrān:	an independent discipline which was established by Ibn Khaldūn. *'Ilm al-'umrān* has its own peculiar object, namely, human civilization and social organization.
essence *(jawhar):*	the essence of something is its basic and most important characteristic which gives it its individual identity.

properties *(awārid):*	qualities, attributes or distinctive features of a thing.

Summary

- Ibn Khaldūn epitomizes a general model of a scholar in the Islamic Civilization. He is a brilliant representative of Islamic science and thought who established a unique theoretical system.
- Ibn Khaldūn's ideas and approaches belong to the multiplex understanding of existence, knowledge, method and truth which is very different from the modern views of positivism and those of modern social theories in general.
- Ibn Khaldūn's inclusive approach does not exclude positivist and other modern approaches but includes and exceeds them.
- According to Ibn Khaldūn’s epistemology, there are three types of knowledge: prophetic knowledge (*al-'Ilm al-Nabawī*), knowledge granted by divine inspiration (*al-Ma’rifah al-Wahbīyyah*) and acquired knowledge (*al-'Ilm al-Kasbī*)
- *Al-'umrān* which is a key concept coined by Ibn Khaldūn means civilization. According to Ibn Khaldūn, civilization is society.
- From the perspective of Ibn Khaldūn, civilizations or societies are not static, they are very dynamic. There is always social change, political change, and change in economics. Society is fluid, it is not like a stone, it is more like water, flowing, and very dynamic.
- Ibn Khaldūn earned a living by giving lectures on *fiqh* at prominent educational establishments of his time such as al-Azhar and by acting as Maliki judge and chief judge. It is possible to see that Ibn Khaldūn was very much affected by his *fiqh* background in the context of history.
- Ibn Khaldūn employs many methods that are applied in *Fiqh* methodology in the science of *Umrān* (*‘ilm al-’umran*) as well. The most important of these is the method of *qiyas*, or comparison. Ibn Khaldūn argues that unobservable phenomena should be compared to observable phenomena.

Dig Deep

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Chapter Thirteen

APPLIED MULTIPLEXITY AND KHALDŪNISM: PAST AND PRESENT

Focus Questions

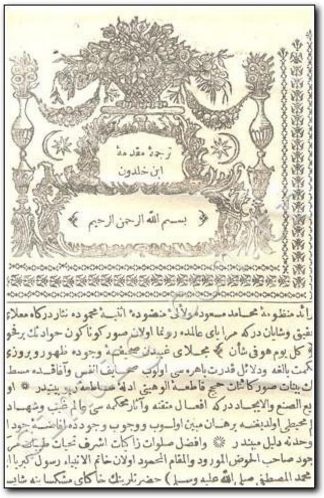
- ◊ What makes Ibn Khaldūn's works multiplex?
- ◊ Who are the Ottoman Khaldūnian scholars?
- ◊ What implications multiplexity might have in our research process and conclusions?
- ◊ How can we apply multiplexity?
- ◊ What does Ibn Khaldūn say for today?

So far, you have learned the ontological, epistemological and methodological stance, and the interrelation between these levels, in Ibn Khaldūn's thought. After this step, you may ask yourself: are these complex network of opinions only written and left in a book? Or did some scholars after Ibn Khaldūn attempt to apply and benefit from his comprehensive theories? On the other hand, you may keep asking, does Ibn Khaldūn's thought have anything to offer to current discussions? What can we learn from him and what can Ibn Khaldūn say to modern history, politics and civilization studies?

In the Ottoman era, you will see that Ibn Khaldūn's works had been widely read, elaborated and applied. Today you will also see that Ibn Khaldūn's thought has also something to say to the modern age in which we are living.

In section A, we will focus on Ottoman Khaldūnism, and at the end of the textbook we will discuss Ibn Khaldūn today.

Section A.
OTTOMAN KHALDŪNISM



ترجمهٔ مقدمهٔ
ابن خلدون

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the late periods of the Ottoman Empire, many scholars, statesmen, thinkers and historians focused on the causes of downfall and the ways to prevent it. And at this point, Ibn Khaldūn's thought was widely accepted as an indispensable source. Ibn Khaldūn's opinions about society, history and especially his theory of decline paved the way for an ''Applied Khaldūnism'' in the Ottoman Empire. The most prominent thinkers during the Ottoman era who used the *Muqaddimah* as a source can be listed as follows: Kınalızâde Ali Efendi (1510-1572), Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî (1541-1599), Kâtib Çelebi (1609-1657), Naîmâ (1655-1716), Taşköprizâde Ahmed Efendi (1495-1561), Müneccimbaşı Derviş Ahmed Lütfullah Dede Efendi (1631-1702), Hayrullah Efendi (1817-1866) and Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1822-1895) (Okumuş 2006: 142).

The first five chapters of Ibn Khaldūn's magnum opus the *Muqaddimah* was first translated into Turkish by shaykh al-Islām Pîrîzâde Mehmed Sahib Efendi (1674-1749) in 1730. This was the first translation of the *Muqaddimah* into a foreign language. With the translation of sixth chapter in the 19th century, the *Muqaddimah* became fully translated into Turkish by another statesman, Ahmet Cevdet Paşa (1822-1895).

Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah* was arguably indispensable for Ottoman intellectuals and that its importance gradually increased from the 16th to the 20th century (Okumuş 2006: 143). After discovering Ibn Khaldūn's thought about society, history and politics, Ottoman intellectuals gradually tried to develop and apply them in practice in order to prevent debility. Especially Kınalızâde Ali, Kâtib Çelebi, Mustafa Naîmâ Efendi and Ahmed Cevdet Paşa all of whom attempted to develop and apply Ibn Khaldūn's thought in different fields (Okumuş 2006: 143).

Ottoman intellectuals as it was indicated above mainly focused on Ibn Khaldūn's theory of decline and his understanding of history and society. They adopted his thought about state and civilizations' lifecycle and tried to apply these to Ottoman reality. This attempt was realized through citations, commentaries and further additions by Ottoman intellectuals to the *Muqaddimah* (Okumuş 2006: 146-147).

For instance, Kınalızâde Ali Efendi displays a very close approach to Ibn Khaldūn in the context of social phenomena. According to Kınalızâde, similar to Ibn Khaldūn, the human being is said to be civilized by its very nature. He says that according to the nature of human beings, they need to mix with other humans, help others and receive help from them in order to get things done. Kınalızâde emphasizes that it is a necessity for humans to live in a social manner which depends on helping each other by using rationality (Kınalızâde 2015: 399-407) (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 89).

Parallel to Ibn Khaldūn, Kınalızâde sees animals as being inspired by God to organize themselves instinctively. On the other side, by using their will, human beings do this by choice (Kınalızâde 2015: 399-407). Both Kınalızâde and Ibn Khaldūn emphasize work specialization and accept social differences as a necessity of living in a social manner (Kınalızâde 2015: 399-407) (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 89). Kınalızâde's stance resembles Ibn Khaldūn's regarding the necessity of an authority among society in order to live in a peaceful manner and prevent injustice and oppression (Okumuş 2006: 152).

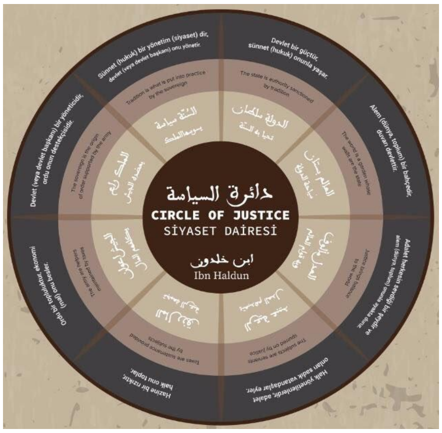


Figure: 13.1: Circle of justice

Kınalızâde emphasizes the prerequisite of a just ruler in order to sustain state's order as well as that of society's in his theory of state and society. Kınalızâde focuses on how the ruler of the state will be just in connection with the *circle of justice* (Kınalızâde 2015: 532). This comprehensive understanding of justice in relation with world, state, tradition (law), sovereign, military, economics, politics and subjects can be seen prior to Kınalızâde's work *Ahlâk-ı Alâî* in Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah* (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 81-82).

Another prominent Ottoman scholar that was influenced by Ibn Khaldūn's thought was Kâtib Çelebi. Kâtib Çelebi who was especially influenced by Ibn Khaldūn's ideas on social and political change approached historical, political and social issues from the perspective of Ibn Khaldūn (Okumuş 2006: 156). Ibn Khaldūn says that:

وأمّا أعمار الدول أيضا وإن كانت تختلف بحسب القرانات، إلاّ أنّ الدولة في الغالب لا تعدو أعمار ثلاثة أجيال والجيل هو عمر شخص واحد من العمر فيكون أربعين هو انتهاء النمو والنشوء إلى غايته (ابن خلدون 2013: 220).

> (...) the life (span) of a dynasty corresponds to the life (span) of an individual; it grows up and passes into an age of stagnation and thence into retrogression. Therefore, people commonly say that the life (span) of a dynasty is one hundred years (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 346).

For Ibn Khaldūn, a dynasty also goes through various phases and each time faces a different situation. Every stage is different than the other and has its own unique characteristics. These five stages of a dynasty are indicated by Ibn Khaldūn in the *Muqaddimah* as follows:

اعلم أن الدولة تنتقل في أطوار مختلفة وحالات متجددة، ويكتسب القائمون بها في كل طور خلقاً من أحوال ذلك الطور لا يكون مثله في الطور الآخر؛ لأن الخلق تابع بالطبع لمزاج الحال الذي هو فيه. وحالات الدولة وأطوارها لا تعدو في الغالب خمسة أطوار: **الطور الأول:** طور الظفر بالبغية وغلب المدافع والممانع والاستيلاء على الملك وانتزاعه من أيدي الدولة السالفة قبلها. فيكون صاحب الدولة في هذا الطور أسوة قومه في اكتساب المجد وجباية المال والمدافعة عن الحوزة والحماية، لا ينفرد دونهم بشيء لأن ذلك هو مقتضى العصبية التي وقع بها الغلب وهي لم تزل بعد بحالها. **الطور الثاني:** طور الاستبداد على قومه والانفراد دونهم بالملك وكبحهم عن التطاول للمساهمة والمشاركة. ويكون صاحب الدولة في هذا الطور معنياً باصطناع الرجال واتخاذ الموالي والصنائع والاستكثار من ذلك لجدع أنوف أهل عصبيته وعشيرته المقاسمين له في نسبه الضاربين في الملك بمثل سهمه. فهو يدافعهم عن الأمر ويصدهم عن موارده ويردهم على أعقابهم أن يخلصوا إليه حتى يقر الأمر في نصابه، ويفرد أهل بيته بما يبني من مجده، فيعاني من مدافعتهم و مغالبتهم مثل ما عاناه الأولون في طلب الأمر أو أشد، لأن الأولين دافعوا الأجانب فكان ظهراؤهم على مدافعتهم أهل العصبية بأجمعهم، وهذا يدافع الأقارب لا يظاهره على مدافعتهم إلا الأقل من الأباعد، فيركب صعباً من الأمر. **الطور الثالث:** طور الفراغ والدعة

لتحصيل ثمرات الملك، مما تنزع طباع البشر إليه من تحصيل المال وتخليد الأثار، وبعد الصيت، فيستفرغ وسعه في الجباية وضبط الدخل والخرج، وإحصاء النفقات والقصد فيها، وتشييد المباني الحافلة والمصانع العظيمة والأمصار المتسعة والهياكل المرتفعة، وإجازة الوفود من أشراف الأمم ووجوه القبائل، وبث المعروف في أهله، هذا مع التوسعة على صنائعه وحاشيته في أحوالهم بالمال والجاه، واعتراض جنوده وإدرار أرزاقهم وإنصافهم في أعطياتهم لكل هلال، حتى يظهر أثر ذلك عليهم في ملابسهم وشكتهم وشاراتهم يوم الزينة فيباهي بهم الدول المسالمة ويرهب الدول المحاربة. وهذا الطور آخر أطوار الاستبداد من أصحاب الدولة. لأنهم في هذه الأطوار كلها مستقلون بآرائهم بانون لعزهم موضحين الطرق لمن بعدهم. **الطور الرابع:** طور القنوع والمسالمة. ويكون صاحب الدولة في هذا قانعاً بما بنى أولوه سلماً لأنظاره من الملوك وأقتاله، مقلداً الماضين من سلفه، ويتبع آثارهم حذو النعل بالنعل، ويقتفي طرقهم بأحسن مناهج الاقتداء، ويرى أن في الخروج عن تقليدهم فساد أمره وأنهم أبصر بما بنوا من مجده. **الطور الخامس:** طور الإسراف والتبذير. ويكون صاحب الدولة في هذا الطور متلفاً لما جمع أولوه في سبيل الشهوات والملاذ والكرم على بطانته وفي مجالسه، واصطناع أخدان السوء وخضراء الدمن، وتقليدهم عظيمات الأمور التي لا يستلفون بحملها، ولا يعرفون ما يأتون ويذرون منها، مستفسداً لكبار الأولياء من قومه، وصنائع سلفه حتى يضطغنوا عليه، و يتخاذلوا عن نصرته، مضيعاً من جنده بما أنفق من أعطياتهم في شهواته، وحجب عنهم وجه مباشرته وتفقده، فيكون مخرباً لما كان سلفه يؤسسون، وهادماً لما كانوا يبنون، وفي هذا الطور تحصل في الدولة طبيعة الهرم، ويستولي عليها المرض المزمن الذي لا تكاد تخلص منه ولا يكون لها معه برء إلى أن تنقرض كما نبينه في الأحوال التي نسردها. والله خير الوارثين(ابن خلدون 2013: 226-227).

> 1) The first stage is that of success, the overthrow of all opposition, and the appropriation of royal authority from the preceding dynasty
>
> 2) The second stage is the one in which the ruler gains complete control over his people, claims royal authority all for himself, excluding them, and prevents them from trying to have a share in it
>
> 3) The third stage is one of leisure and tranquillity in which the fruits of royal authority are enjoyed
>
> 4) The fourth stage is one of contentment and peacefulness.
>
> 5) The fifth stage is one of waste and squandering
>
> (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: I, 353-355).

Likewise, according to Kâtib Çelebi there is also an analogy between an individual and a state and social condition. Each of them go through three stages. These are as follows:

> 1) Time of Increase, (*zamân-i nümüvv*)
>
> 2) Time of Stagnation (*zamân-i vukûf*)

3) Time of Decline (*zamân-i inhitat*) (Kâtib Çelebi 1982: 20).

As you can notice, Kâtib Çelebi's theory of state and social conditions was clearly influenced by Ibn Khaldūn (Okumuş 2006: 156).

In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was greatly affected by Western modernization. With the increasing impact of regression, Ottoman statesman tried to prevent the empire from decline and collapse. Accordingly, they tried to find a way to end this crisis. One of these scholars and statesman was Ahmed Cevdet Paşa. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa focused on Ibn Khaldūn's theory of social change and decline. While reading and detecting the crisis of society and state Ahmed Cevdet Paşa had benefited from the *Muqaddimah*.

Firstly, he completed the deficient translation of the *Muqaddimah* by translating its last and final chapter. In his work *Tezâkir*, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa as a historian emphasizes Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah* from the perspective of its pioneering feature on applying reasoning for past cases (Ahmed Cevdet Paşa cited in Okumuş 2006: 173). In his own words, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa writes that *Michlet, Taine, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Khaldūn were very influential in forming my own my ideas* (Fındıkoğlu cited in Okumuş 2006: 174).

While trying to prevent the Ottoman Empire from its ultimate collapse, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa benefitted from Ibn Khaldūn's ideas. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's understanding of history and society is also circular as we find in Ibn Khaldūn. According to him, states are similar to human organisms: they are born, grow, develop and die. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa goes one step further, and just like human beings' necessity to act and behave according to their ages, states also should behave according to the laws and necessities of the conditions and stages in which they are in (Ahmed Cevdet Paşa cited in Okumuş 2006: 175).

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa also accepts Ibn Khaldūn's conception of *asabbiyah*'s (social solidarity) role in the foundation of a state. He applies Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *asabiyyah* to the Ottoman Empire's history and rereads it accordingly. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa says, from the foundation of a state after some time blood ties eventually loses its power. The state emerges from *asabiyyah* (social solidarity) but grows on the ruins of it. In societies, religious solidarity replaces tribal and lineage solidarity. According to him, at the center of the Ottoman Empire there is Islam and when this unity of belief, which aimed to congregate the Muslim world into one center, was its main political aim the empire had reached its zenith (Okumuş 2006: 176). While reading Ottoman history according to Ibn Khaldūn, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa does not fall into determinism and he believes that prevention from decline is possible by taking wise precautions (Okumuş 2006: 175).

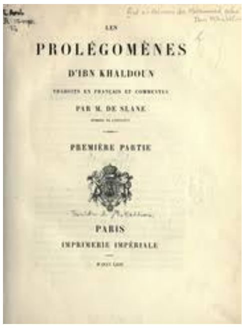
Section B.
IBN KHALDŪN TODAY

The purpose of applied Khaldūnism is to develop an alternative approach to understand the present social problems in the world and offer solutions for them based on the legacy of Ibn Khaldūn. This will be illustrated and elaborated in detail in the second volume of this book.

1. Ibn Khaldūn as an example of Multiplexity: Why Ibn Khaldūn?

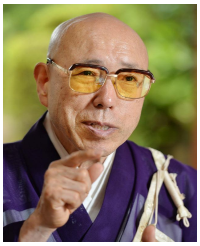
In the non-western world, Western social theories are generally presented as universal truth. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldūn provides intellectually independent opportunities in explaining social phenomena. Western sociologists consider Ibn Khaldūn as the founder of social and human studies in the scientific sense. However, because of the ontological and epistemological differences, Ibn Khaldūn can be an alternative rather than a precursor to sociology. Moreover, Ibn Khaldūn's ideas are not only part of intellectual history but they also represent a living, holistic approach.

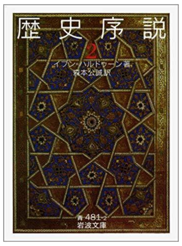
Ibn Khaldūn's ideas and approaches belong to the multiplex understanding of existence, knowledge, method and truth, which is very different from positivism and modern social theory in general. However, Ibn Khaldūn's approach does not exclude positivist and other modern approaches but is in fact inclusively exceeds them. Ibn Khaldūn, with his multiplex approach epitomizes a general model of a scholar in the Islamic civilization.



LES
PROLÉGOMÈNES
D'IBN KHALDOUN
PAR M. DE SLANE
PREMIÈRE PARTIE
PARIS
IMPRIMERIE IMPÉRIALE

In modern academia, the intellectual legacy of Ibn Khaldūn and his magnum opus the *Muqaddimah* is still widely discussed, criticized and applied. As mentioned above, the *Muqaddimah*'s first translation into a foreign language was in Turkish. The *Muqaddimah*'s first five chapters were translated into Turkish as *Tercüme-i Mukaddime-i İbn Haldun* by shaykh al-Islām Pîrîzâde Mehmed Sahib Efendi (1674-1749) in 1730. In the 19th century, the translation was completed with Ahmet Cevdet Paşa's translation of the sixth chapter (1822-1895).

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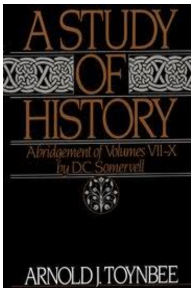
The Ottoman Empire was the first but not the only center that paid attention to Ibn Khaldūn and his *Muqaddimah*. Especially in the 19th century, after its translation into Turkish, the Irish orientalist William McGuckin De Slane translated the *Muqaddimah* into French in 1858 under the title: *Les prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldoun*. Following its French translation, the *Muqaddimah* was translated into Urdu by Ahmed Hüseyn Allahabad and Şemsululema Abdurrahman between 1924-1932. The *Muqaddimah* was also translated into Persian by Muḥammad Parvīn Gunābādī, into Indian by Rızvi Athar Ahbes, into Porteguese by José Khoury and Angelina Bierrenbach Khoury, into English by the orientalist Franz Rosenthal and into Japanese by the Buddhist priest and orientalist Morimoto Kosei. Other than these, Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah* was translated either partly or fully into various other languages.



Ibn Khaldūn and his thought has been highly influential in modern academia and scholarly works alike. Prominent English historian Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) is one such example. According to Robert Irwin, Ibn Khaldūn was one of Toynbee's intellectual heroes (Irwin 1997: 466). According to Toynbee, civilizations have life-cycles. He argues that civilizations may follow these steps: Genesis, Growth, Breakdown and Disintegration (Toynbee 1988: 5-6).

Another prominent intellectual and historian influenced by Ibn Khaldūn was the German scholar Oswald Spengler (1880-1936). According to Spengler, cultures are just like organisms. They are born young, become mature, grow old and die (Spengler 2006: 73-75). Spengler's work *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of The West)* and Toynbee's 12-volume work *A Study of History* can be given as examples of works that show that historical processes are cyclical. This cyclical understanding of history shows how Ibn Khaldūn had a great impact on intellectuals of different centuries.

> Ibn Khaldun, the most illumiating interpreter of the morphology of history that has appeared in the world so far (Toynbee 1988: 489).

Ibn Khaldūn's ideas and the concepts coined by him have been instrumental in various fields. For instance, his cyclical understanding in society-politics and circulation from nomadity to sedentariness has inspired many scholars in modern academia. For instance, Morteza Hashemi, a social anthropologist, applied Ibn Khaldūn's intellectual legacy in order to explain the rise and decline of the Silicon Valley firms and institutions. He names this attempt as a neo-Khaldūnian theory and emphasizes the opportunity of Ibn Khaldūn's thought to explain the cyclical replacement of the untrained with the trained. Hashemi uses metaphors for the established tech firms and the garage-based start up initiators, respectively, as city-dwellers and bedouins (Hashemi 2019: 1).

Another scholar, Mahmood Mamdani in his article *Reading Ibn Khaldūn in Kampala* points to the opportunities that Ibn Khaldūn provides in order to de-colonize the curriculum of a social research institute in Africa. He emphasizes the importance of Ibn Khaldūn in rethinking the Eurocentric or Afrocentric, in other words, a single place and single origin centered perspectives (Mamdani 2017: 8-11). Another prominent scholar who applied Ibn Khaldūn's stance on history and sociology is Syed Farid Alatas. In his work *Applying Ibn Khaldūn,* Alatas re-reads the rise and fall of the Safavid Empire from a Khaldūnian framework. He also focuses on Saudi Arabia and Syria as modern Arab states from a Khaldūnian perspective (Alatas 2014: 112). Recep Şentürk also calls for an applied Khaldūnism instead of only praising Ibn Khaldūn and his works. In order to study and apply Ibn Khaldūn's intellectual legacy, Ibn Haldun University and its Alliance of Civilizations

Institute can be regarded as important attempts for applied Khaldūnism in an academical environment.

2. How can Ibn Khaldūn help us solve problems in today's social sciences?

Ibn Khaldūn, with his Multiplex approach, epitomizes a general model of a scholar in the Islamic Civilization. Accordingly, Ibn Khaldūn's approach may help us in solving some of the major problems we face today in the social sciences caused by hegemonic paradigms. These problems may be listed as follows:

1) The claim that there is only one civilization in the world and some societies are not a part of civilization. Humanity evolved in a linear way until it reached the present Western society.
2) Exclusive materialist and technological approach to civilization.
3) Overcoming uniplexity in ontology, epistemology and methodology. Understanding history in a holistic way by overcoming the false dichotomy between material and cultural causes as well as the macro and the micro levels of analysis.
4) How to protect ourselves from the negative impact of wealth, prosperity and political power.
5) Circular organization vis-à-vis pyramidical organization in a state and other organizations.

3. Civilization or Civilizations?

What is civilization? How do you describe civilization? What are the ways to become civilized? Is there only one civilization in the world or do multiple civilizations exists together? What is the source of civilization? Is it religion? Technological inventions? Architectural techniques? Palace-oriented way of living and etiquette? Liberal Democracy? Or living together as a society? These questions form the basis of a highly debated and studied field of the social sciences: civilization studies. Ibn Khaldūn's approach regarding civilizations is a product of a multi-valued logic. In the Middle-Ages, inter-civilizational relations were accepted based on a dual logic. On the other hand, in the Islamic world it was a multi-valued logic that characterized inter-civilizational relations. While dominant authorities in the West divide the world into 'us' and 'others', the practice in the Islamic world was multi-cultural and multi-civilizational (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 536).

At this point, Ibn Khaldūn presents us with a better understanding of the world and civilizations alongside their relations. As we have discussed earlier, most of the theories about civilization today classify societies as either civilized or uncivilized, creating a dichotomy between primitive societies and developed societies. Sometimes the criterion for being civilized is technology, sometimes it is understood as a palace-centered way of living. This dualistic logic is reductionist. It attempts to homogenize the world into a dichotomy consisting of 'us' and the 'other', although neither 'us' nor the 'other' is homogenous (Şentürk-Nizamüddin 2008: 537). Often one may notice that societies who refer to themselves as civilized are mainly those from Western societies. This is a clear reflection of Eurocentric views.

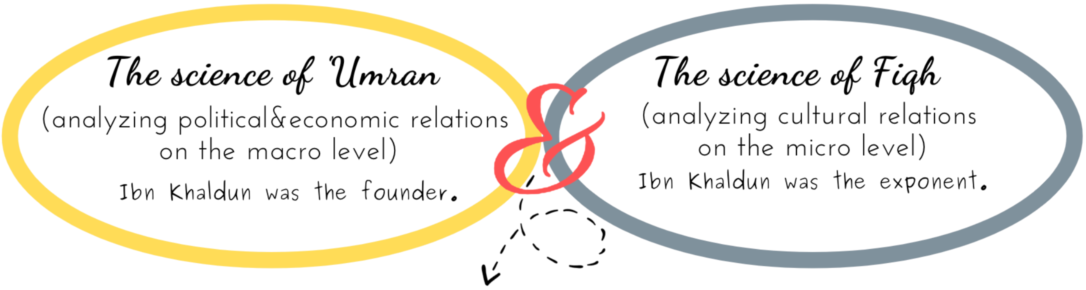
On the other hand, based on Ibn Khaldūn's understanding all civilizations are to be recognized as equal at the social level. Various civilizations during the time of Ibn Khaldūn were living in harmony under Muslim rule throughout the Islamic world from Andalusia Spain to Eastern Turkestan near China (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 519). According to Şentürk, in this order the structure establishing harmony among these civilizations and were regulating inter-civilisational relations were molded by *Fiqh*. Today, it is imperative that inter-civilizational relations be conceived through a multi-valued logic as was employed by Ibn Khaldūn (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 536-537). Bearing in mind today's conditions, Ibn Khaldūn's pluralistic understanding of civilizations still holds its validity and can arguably offer opportunities for bringing intercivilizational relations into harmony (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 537). Since Ibn Khaldūn accepts that all societies are civilized and no civilization can claim superiority over another, his ideas can be used to overcome today's Eurocentric and discriminatory approaches.

4. Is Technology and Sedentariness a Criterion for Civilization?

According to Ibn Khaldūn, technology is not a criterion for a society to be considered civilized. For instance, societies that commonly use technological tools such as cars and planes are generally regarded as civilized, while those that use animal power such as horses and donkeys are not. According to Ibn Khaldūn, this is not a criterion to judge a society as either civilized or uncivilized. At this point, one may ask: is it possible to accept a society as being more civilized due to their nuclear military power which has the capacity of killing thousands of people in a split second with no exceptions? This technology-based understanding of civilization concludes a classification of humanity on the basis of an exclusive materialism and ignores morality. Moreover, whether technology is good or bad is highly contested. One can look at the environment and observe how modern science and technology has had a devastating impact on nature. On the other hand, is it possible to accept people who have lived for so many centuries in the natural environment without corrupting and polluting it as uncivilized?

According to Ibn Khaldūn, societies are accepted as civilizations regardless of their types of societal organizations. They have moral understanding, religion, laws, polity and economy. Accordingly, Ibn Khaldūn says that there are two types of civilizations or societies which include *al-'umrān al-haḍārī* (sedentary civilization) and *al-'umrān al-badawī* (nomadic civilization). From this perspective there is no society that is primitive and outside of the fold of civilization.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, it is not possible to accept Marx's and Hegel's view of society as something that progresses progress until it reaches its final destination. Marx and Hegel, however, both have different views on the end of history. For Marx society reaches its zenith with the communist society, whereas for Hegel it is the liberal state. Both these kinds of understandings are grounded in a linear understanding of history, one that progresses towards its end in a deterministic way. These evolutionary understandings of history which emerged in Western civilization are commonly used for a type of Eurocentric hegemony over different geographies. It is important to note that in modern social sciences most of the theories are accepted as evolutionary theories. Consequently, their understanding accepts the dichotomy between primitive and civilized societies, which, ultimately, is a false dichotomy. According to Ibn Khaldūn, civilizations are comprised of a multiple of specifications which does not allow for an end of history, especially in the context of a specific political understanding, technological-scientific development, level of wealth and military power. Changes throughout history and across societies occur in a circular way.



The science of 'Umran
(analyzing political&economic relations on the macro level)
Ibn Khaldun was the founder.

&

The science of Fiqh
(analyzing cultural relations on the micro level)
Ibn Khaldun was the exponent.

can be a source of inspiration for those who today want to **reinterpret** the **inter-civilizational relations** that become more and more complex from a constructive point of view, and those who want to **reshape** them from a more **pluralistic** and **peaceful** perspective.

5. Ibn Khaldūn as an Alternative to the Uniplex Paradigm

Ibn Khaldūn with his multiplex approach epitomizes a general model of a scholar in the Islamic civilization. He uses *marātib al-wujūd*, *marātib al-'ilm* and *marātib al-'usūl* and, accordingly, does not reduce social phenomena to one level and instead operates at different levels with different ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies.

Since Ibn Khaldūn is not a reductionist, he also uses rational and empiricist methods when necessary. Therefore, he is both a rationalist and empiricist scholar. That is why some people regard him as the Muslim Marx. However, this understanding of Ibn Khaldūn would be reductionist since this would mean reducing Ibn Khaldūn to the rationalist-materialist domain and ignoring his background in *tasawwuf* and religious rationalism.

Ibn Khaldūn not only accepted different levels of knowledge but he also wrote books in various disciplines. For instance, he wrote a book in the field of tasawwuf called *Shifa al-Sa'il*. He also wrote an abridgement on Fahruddin Razi's *al-Muhassal* entitled *Lubab al-Muhassal*, which is on the subject of *Kalām*. Contradicting interpretations of Ibn Khaldūn focus only on one side of his works and excludes others. Ibn Khaldūn's approach does not exclude these approaches but inclusively exceeds them. He uses reasoning conducts empirical research, but he is a Sufi at the same time. He uses appropriate methods by applying a proper epistemology which is based on a proper ontology. In order to have a holistic understanding of Ibn Khaldūn and his works, it should be noted that his approach is multiplex in that it operates at different levels with different epistemologies and methodologies. As a multiplex thinker, Ibn Khaldūn symbolizes an alternative of today's hegemonic, uniplex approaches which reduce ontology, epistemology and methodology to narrow fields.

6. How to protect ourselves from the negative impact of wealth, prosperity and political power?

فافهم ذلك و اعتبر به أن غاية العمران هي الحضارة و الترف، و أنه إذا بلغ غايته انقلب إلى الفساد و أخذ في الهرم كالأعمار الطبيعية للحيوانات. بل نقول إن الأخلاق الحاصلة من الحضارة و الترف هي عين الفساد؛ لأن الإنسان إنما هو إنسان باقتداره على جلب منافعه، ودفع مضاره، واستقامة خلقه للسعي في ذلك. و الحضري لا يقدر على مباشرته حاجاته: إما عجزاً لما حصل له من الدعة، أو ترفعاً لما حصل من المربي في النعيم و الترف. و كلا الأمرين ذميم. و كذلك لا يقدر على دفع المضار واستقامة خلقه للسعي في ذلك. و الحضري بما قد فقد من خلق الإنسان بالترف والنعيم في قهر التأديب و التعليم، فهو بذلك عيال على الحامية التي تدافع عنه. ثم هو فاسد أيضاً غالباً بما فسدت منه العوائد و طاعتها في ما تلونت به النفس من مكانتها كما قررناه، إلا في الأقل النادر. و إذا فسد الإنسان في قدرته على أخلاقه و دينه، فقد فسدت إنسانيته وصار مسخاً على الحقيقة. و بهذا الاعتبار كان الذين يتقربون، من جند السلطان، إلى البداوة و الخشونة، أنفع من الذين يتربون على الحضارة و خلقها. و هذا موجود في كل دولة. فقد تبين أن الحضارة هي سن الوقوف لعمر العالم من العمران و الدول. و الله الواحد القهار. (إبن خلدون 2013: 453)

> (...) the goal of civilization is sedentary culture and luxury. When civilization reaches that goal, it turns toward corruption and starts being senile, as happens in the natural life of living beings. Indeed, we may say that the qualities of character resulting from sedentary culture and luxury are identical with corruption (...) He then usually becomes corrupt with regard to his religion, also. The (luxury) customs and his subservience to them have corrupted him, and his soul has been colored by (luxury) habits, as we have stated. There are only very rare exceptions (...) It has thus become clear that the stage of sedentary culture is the stopping point in the life of

> civilization and dynasties. "God is one and powerful." (Ibn Khaldūn 1980: II, 296-297).

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the history of civilizations is full of paradoxes and irony (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 544). The most basic paradox is the transformation of a civilization's zenith into its decline as you can see in the above excerpt from the *Muqaddimah*. This can be referred to, according to Şentürk, as the 'continuous cycle of civilizations' or the 'continual transformation of civilizations'.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the character of a civilization towards sedentariness and material luxury runs parallel to a decline in good moral qualities. These qualities include the ability of the subjects to provide for themselves, defend their state, and coexist in peace. Instead, sedentary people become weak, cowardly, and immoral. As a result, the balance is broken and the sedentary people gradually become a burden to their societies. Decline becomes evermore precipitous as feelings of social solidarity (*'asabiyyah*) diminish while the civilization moves through its various phases. As a result, from this perspective, there is a paradox: the movement towards material luxury and sedentary culture brings a decline in morality and goes in parallel with a weakening social solidarity. By employing a holistic approach which brings together economic, ethical, political, and social elements, it is possible to explain the loss of Jerusalem to the Crusaders, Andalusia to the Spanish and Baghdad to the Mongols with respect to the Islamic civilization (Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 542–543).

The question then becomes: is this cycle deterministic or could it possibly be avoided? According to Ibn Khaldūn, the continuous cycle of civilizations tends to be inescapable, which is akin to the cycle of ruling classes who vie for power within a civilization. According to Şentürk, in general, the will of human beings cannot stand against or change this historical law, that is, unless they refrain from leisure and extravagance and maintain communal ties and avoid individualism. Ibn Khaldūn's explanation should therefore be viewed not in a deterministic way but essentially as a warning. For instance, the Ottomans had taken this warning into account, and this explains the secret behind their longevity notwithstanding their prosperity. To do so, the spiritual and cultural approach of the *fuqahā* complements the material approach of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'umrān*. While the discipline of *'umrān* analyzes, on the macro level, political and economic relations, fiqh examines cultural relations on the micro level. Ibn Khaldūn therefore warns us that if a society develops economically then this may cause individualism, erosion in both morality and solidarity; however, if people have the foresight to take certain measures then this could be prevented or, at the least, delayed. In this light, Ibn Khaldūn's intellectual legacy could be benefitted today in dealing with socio-political and socio-economic changes.

7. Circular Organization vis-à-vis Pyramidical Organization in the State and Other Organizations

The pyramidal shape of organizations has the handful of elites at the top and the majority at the very bottom. This is how the power distance and hierarchical differences are illustrated. While many examples can be traced back in history, this understanding of state organization became hegemonic after the thirty years war between 1630-1648, when a new polity emerged out of the experiences of political, economic and religious struggles in Europe – the modern nation-state. With the Westphalia Peace Treaty, which was signed in 1648, the nation state with its territorially-conceived, equal, and ultimate sovereignty on the people was accepted as the only actor of the political environment. This understanding of the state became hegemonic until the present day. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) depicts his version of the modern state as a monster in his magnum opus the *Leviathan* (Hobbes 1965: 132). This particular type of state is based on an absolute hierarchy and inequality. According to Şentürk, this type of state has a pyramidal organization which emphasizes a hierarchical system.

On the other hand, in Islamic civilization there is a different understanding of the state whose roots trace back before the advent of Islam. This understanding of the state has a circular and holistic perspective regarding socio-political and socio-economic phenomena. This circle, which in mathematics is considered as the most perfect form, consists of equal elements that are strongly tied to each other; if one of these elements disappears, then the whole circle would also disappear as a result. Moreover, the inside part of a circle is empty and, therefore, we cannot consider any elements as being more central or important than the others. When we apply this to the eight elements of a society – the world, the state, tradition (law), authority, military, taxes, subjects, and justice – each one of them turns into one element which is closely tied and dependent on the existence and prosperity of the other elements to survive. This circularity and equality is achieved through the notion of justice, thus the concept of the Circle of Justice. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the state is then a part of a circle which thoroughly connected with the notion of justice. In a circular manner justice is related with the world, state, tradition (law), sovereign, military, economics, politics and subjects. In comparison with the pyramidal understanding, this view incorporates an equalist and pluralist understanding of civilization, politics and society (Şentürk 2017: 6-7). As discussed in the previous section, this type of circular understanding was adopted by many prominent Ottoman scholars up until the decline of the empire.

The circular state model can be perceived as an alternative to the modern pyramidical state model as a more just and equal system. Accordingly, Ibn Khaldūn offers us a circular state model which can be used to solve problems caused by the present pyramidical state model. Since the pyramidal model can also be found in other social organizations, this search for an alternative can go beyond state organizations and into other social and economic institutions.

Key Words

al-'umrān: Ibn Khaldūn uses the terms *al-'umrān, madaniyyah*, *al-ijtima' al-bashari* and *al-ijtima' al-insani* to mean civilization, and according to Ibn Khaldūn, civilization denotes society.

The opening chapter of the first book pertains to anthropic *ʿumrān* in general. Here prevail some premises (*muqaddemāt*), first of which is: It is of necessity for humans to live communally. *Hukamā* (philosophers) articulate this as such: **Humans are naturally predisposed to sociality**.

That is, humans cherish an absolute need to society (‘*ijtimā’*), which in their terminology corresponds to Madaniyyah, which in turn denotes *ʿumrān''* (Ibn Khaldūn cited in Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 526).

The above excerpt illustrates Ibn Khaldūn’s emphasis on conceiving the concepts of *ʿumrān*, *madaniyyah* and ‘*ijtimā’* as cognates.

al-'umrān al-badawī:	nomadic civilization or society.
al-umrān al-haḍārī:	sedentary civilization or society.
‘ilm al-'umrān:	an independent discipline which was established by Ibn Khaldūn. 'Ilm al-'Umrān has its own peculiar object, namely, human civilization and social organization.
mulk:	royal authority.
riyāsah:	leadership, or more specifically, a chieftain who is obeyed but has no power to force others to accept his rule.
aṣabiyyah:	social solidarity, referring to a peculiar type of motivation that ensures protection and makes possible a mutual form of defense and every other kind of social activity.
circle of justice*:*	an age-old comprehensive understanding of socio-political and socio-economical system. It was reshaped and reproduced according to the religious core of the Islamic civilization.
shaykh al-Islām:	*mufti* of Istanbul and head of the *ulama* in the Ottoman Empire.

Summary

- Ibn Khaldūn's ideas are not only part of intellectual history, but at the same time it represents a living holistic approach.
- Western sociologists consider Ibn Khaldūn as the founder of social and humanistic studies in the scientific sense. However, because of the ontological and epistemological differences, Ibn Khaldūn can be seen as an alternative rather than a precursor to sociology.
- Ibn Khaldūn's approach does not exclude modern approaches but inclusively exceeds them. Therefore, Ibn Khaldūn's ideas may overlap with those of the most famous modern Western scientists including Karl Marx and Max Weber. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldūn has a wider perspective given that it includes these modern approaches.
- Western social theories are generally presented as universal truth. Ibn Khaldūn provides intellectually independent opportunities in explaining non-western social phenomena.
- Inter-civilizational relations today are generally dealt with through a dual logic: 'us' and 'others'. A multi-valued logic works with a plural 'us' rather than an 'I', and plural others rather than 'the other'. For Ibn Khaldūn, all civilizations are considered to be socially and legally equal.
- Ibn Khaldūn warns his readers that if you develop economically, then this may cause individualism, erosion in both morality and solidarity, but that certain measures can be taken to prevent it. This is essentially how we can benefit from the ideas of Ibn Haldun today.

Dig Deep

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Take-away of the Book

The social sciences have long vacillated between two competing extremes: positivism and idealist-interpretivist approaches. On the one hand, positivism seeks to identify general laws, emulating models of the natural sciences to explain what human beings are and why they do what they do in society. The establishment of positivist social sciences is usually attributed to the 19th-century French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) who believed that the methods of the natural sciences would be as effective in the human sciences. Comte is also famously noted to have used the term "social physics" to refer to the social sciences.

As the natural world differs from the social one, positivists have failed to capture the complexities of social reality by reducing social action to material causes and brute facts while undermining human agency and the role of meaning and purpose in human behavior. Known also as *naturalism* in the philosophy of social science literature, this research tradition has further excluded values from the study of human action with the positivist concern of "value-neutrality." Thus have the social sciences been hindered from contributing to human well-being.

Idealist-interpretivist approaches, on the other hand, draw a sharp line between the natural and social domains arguing that these two strands of scientific inquiry fundamentally differ from one another. They highlight the significance of meaning, language, and the active role of the human individual in the construction of social reality. One of the pioneers of the interpretivist approach was Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), who openly criticized the monopoly of positivism with regard to what constituted a science. He argued that the social sciences should not view human beings as complex machines and that the aim of social research should be understanding (*verstehen*), not explanation as claimed by the positivists. True social research, therefore, is based on an earnest attempt to understand the lived experiences of people rather than to discover universal laws that presumably govern human behavior. Similar to Comte, Dilthey named his discipline *geisteswissenschaften* (human sciences), which literally means 'sciences of spirit'. Interpretivism today has become the major alternative to positivist research methods in social sciences.

However, the idealist-interpretivist approach and its reliance on a relativist ontology have often resulted in an excessive diminution of the material dimension of both human beings and of social reality. Moreover, the relativist ontology of the interpretivist theoretical paradigm has ultimately led to various forms of moral subjectivism and perspectivism. Considering the popularity of interpretivist methods, the social sciences today do not seem to take much interest in a "scientistic" approach to the study of human society. Rather, social scientists today are more keen on investigating the feasibility of understanding and representing concepts and beliefs of traditions alien to one's own. Such an approach asks: is true outside observation possible? Or must "every group […] be its own social scientist"?

Today, we can observe that the polarity between positivism and idealism has been extended to the division between analytical and continental philosophy, and, in particular, phenomenology. These two approaches, positivism and idealism, have largely shaped the way we think about society and have contributed to great leaps in our understanding of the human condition. However, these two radically opposing views have inevitably created a degree of factionalization in the field, making it very difficult to exchange ideas. Basing their viewpoints upon a reductive notion of reality, both camps investigate questions in line with their respective methodologies, and toss aside all those which cannot be assimilated. Such methodological rigor has not gone unrewarded. But seen from a different perspective, the picture painted of human nature and action has contained a number of distortions and deliberate omissions of other aspects of the same social reality.

In western intellectual debates, the major fissure Aristotle and Plato opened has not been altered much in the subsequent millennia except for some slight changes. The same binary survives in different iterations. Once it was positivism versus idealism, then it became realism versus constructivism, which in turn became objectivism versus interpretivism. The naturalist-interpretivist and the analytical-continental distinctions in philosophy may be seen as yet another iteration of the same perceived dichotomy.

The world is now in need of an alternative approach that is able to carve out space for neglected perspectives so that multiple approaches and methodologies can exist side by side in a complementary, rather than mutually exclusive, relationship. Such an alternative approach would be able to put seemingly opposed camps into dialogue with one another, rather than falling into different reductionist traps. Today, a number of alternative research philosophies in the social sciences seek to transcend the material–ideal dichotomy. For example, in his influential *Provincializing Europe*, Dipesh Chakrabarty discusses the limitations of the ontologically singular conception of the human being that dominates European social sciences. According to Chakrabarty, such a conception of the human being is inadequate to explain the development of political modernity in South Asia where gods and spirits are part of the political domain. Another prime example of a scholar who has challenged the dominant perspectives in the social-scientific realm is Roy Bhaskar, the founder of critical realism. As a result of his engagement with the South Asian metaphysical tradition, Bhaskar developed a new ontology for the social sciences known as *transcendental dialectic critical realism* to invite social scientists to better address the contemporary debates about religion and science, spirituality, and the ecological crisis.

The human being and the world she resides in have both material composition and that which transcends the material. This is also reflected in the social imagination. The world, in this view, is not merely a corporeal reality suitable for satiating human needs and desires, with its vast resources waiting to be exploited, but is the home where the weary human finds refuge and comfort, where her spiritual needs are satisfied and where the artifacts of civilization subsist side-by-side with the majestic inimitable handiwork of God. Similarly, the human-being with her complex physiology, psychology, and spirituality is more than lifeless debris upon the ocean of fate or one among innumerable brutish fauna whose purpose is merely to survive in the wilderness. Only by appreciating the complexity of the self and its deeds can one inculcate a more authentic sense of physical, intellectual, and spiritual humility. Only by knowing ourselves can we know our place in the universe.

Appreciation for the complexity of reality has been a feature of Islamic discourse since the beginning of Islam itself. This has subsumed the understanding that the human being, as a part of reality, is a complex entity requiring attention in all of the aspects that constitute it. This sophisticated understanding of reality and the human being has been expressed using the term ‘multiplexity’.

Multiplexity

It is possible to say that the structure of Islamic thought and discourse is characterized by multiplexity as the following:

- Multiplex Existence (ontology), which in Arabic is *Marātib al-Wujūd*
- Multiplex Knowledge (epistemology) as *Marātib al-ʿUlūm*
- Multiplex Methodology as *Marātib al-Usūl*
- Multiplex Meaning as *Marātib al-Maʿāni*
- Multiplex Norms as *Marātib al-Ahkām*
- Multiplex Truth as *Marātib al-Haqāʾiq*

Multiplexity as a research paradigm has three essential philosophical components – namely multiplex ontology (*marātib al-wujūd*), multiplex epistemology (*marātib al-ʿulūm*), and multiplex methodology (*marātib al-usūl)* – which branch out into multiplex conceptions of meaning, norm, and truth. The first and foremost important component which molds the latter is multiplex ontology. As used in the classical Islamic intellectual traditions of philosophy, *kalām*, and *tasawwuf*, *marātib al-wujūd* (meaning, literally, ‘levels of being’) is an ontological term which indicates that existence has multiple layers, i.e. material, non-material, and divine. Although this understanding that the existence is not only material but has also unseen and divine levels can be found in the Qur’an in many instances, and has later been systematized by Muslim scholars in their attempts to realize the Islamic worldview. Another type of classification of existence from a multiplex perspective which was formulated by al-Ghazālī and Taskhoprizade is as follows: material existence in the world of objects (*wujūd fī al-aʿyān*), conceptual existence in the mind (*wujūd fī al-dhihn*), linguistic existence in speech (*wujūd fī al-lafdh*), existence in writing (*wujūd fī al-kha⍰*). The word ‘multiplexity’ is being coined to represent the concept of *marātib* in the Islamic literature. Our aim here is to contextualize this already systematic ontological conception that has the potential to serve as a foundation for a comprehensive multiplex perspective, accommodating insights from divergent views and discourses while ensuring intellectual humility.

Currently, in today’s academia it is commonly accepted that there can legitimately be only a single type of scientific knowledge, one that could be strictly obtained through observation and experiment. This general recognition is based on an epistemological persuasion that gives precedence to sense perception and reason over other means of knowledge such as intuition and divine revelation. We can, however, alternatively, adopt a more comprehensive approach to epistemology that will allow for different types of knowledge to be treated as equally legitimate. This epistemological approach as conceptualized by Muslim scholars is here called multiplex epistemology which is *marātib al-ʿulūm* or *marātib al-‘ilm* (lit: levels of knowledge) in Arabic and is one of the three essential components of multiplexity as a research paradigm. Multiplex epistemology is a theory of knowledge that deems senses, reason, and divine revelation as legitimate sources of knowledge. It classifies sources of knowledge into two categories, objective and subjective. Objective sources of knowledge include sense perception (*al-hawās al-salīma*), sound reason (*al-‘aql al-salīm*), and revelation or reported knowledge (*al-khabar al-sādiq*). Subjective sources of knowledge include intuition, dreams, inspiration, and spiritual illumination (*kashf*). Accordingly, multiplex epistemology, in contradistinction to especially positivist epistemology, embraces different kinds of knowledge (i.e. empirical, rational, reported, and spiritual). Empirical, rational, and reported knowledge are objective and binding, while spiritual knowledge is subjective and non-binding. From the multiplex epistemology perspective, these are not mutually exclusive. They do not negate each other, but on the contrary, complement each other.

The third main component of multiplexity is multiplex methodology, or *marātib al-usūl.* It is clearly different from the widespread positivist methodology which accepts that there is a single scientific method applicable to everything. It argues that if there is something that cannot be studied with this scientific method, it should simply be excluded from the legitimate domain of study. Multiplex methodology, on the other hand, uses both empirical and rational methods in addition to religious reasoning and self-purification. Building upon the multiplex conception of knowledge, an

Ottoman scholar Tashkoprizade (d.1561), deriving mainly from al-Ghazālī (d.1111), has systematized two main methods to acquire knowledge in his book *Mawdū'āt al-'Ulūm* (Subjects of Disciplines). The first method is called *naẓar* which means reasoning or theorizing, and the second is *tasfiyah* meaning self-purification. There are two types of reasoning (*naẓar*), namely pure reasoning and religious reasoning. If one is studying nature, laws of physics, or biology, one can use pure reasoning because, at the material level of existence, the focus is on material phenomena and their causal relations. As for religious reasoning, it is mainly used in disciplines such as *kalām* and *fiqh*. This difference is only valid for methodological purposes.

Tashkoprizade's primary goal was the establishing a system of disciplines that reconciled rational fact and revelatory truth, as well as intuitive experience through the enhancement of personal virtue. In his work on ethics, he divides the world into macrocosm (i.e. nature) and microcosm (i.e. human being): natural sciences, mathematics and engineering study the former while *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) explores the latter. And the ethical foundations of macrocosm and microcosm have been studied through various interpretations of revelation.

Tashkoprizade's system of knowledge does not merely present an encyclopedia of science, but also presents a picture of the intellectuals needed by society. Tashkoprizade called the intellectuals who reconcile the facts of reason with the norms of revelation, and whose spiritual practices refine their minds and bring stability and order to society, "the place where the two oceans meet" (*majmaʿ al-bahrayn*). This image of the intellectual as the microcosmic ideal, also known as the complete person (*al-insan al-kamil*), was widespread in Ottoman society.

Where are We Heading to?

This book has made three significant contributions by enhancing the conventional way of teaching theories and methods. Firstly, it has brought to the fore the implicit philosophical underpinnings of commonly used theories and methods. Secondly, and more importantly, it has introduced multiplexity as an alternative research philosophy. Multiplexity is a newly envisioned holistic paradigm to be applied in all of the domains of science including nature, society, and language. It has its roots in the long-standing worldviews of major civilizations, however, it has been neglected due to the hegemony of reductionist worldviews during the modern period. Thirdly, by introducing multiplexity, we demonstrated the horizons beyond Eurocentrism in social sciences.

This simple statement means that every theory has an implicit ontology, meaning that without at least an assumed understanding of being and existence we cannot defend any position in social theory. Moreover, your ontology determines your epistemology meaning that any theorist must build his theories on an epistemology based on his ontology. The combination of ontology and epistemology leads to a kind of methodology which is consistent with this combination. This suggests that every theory either implicitly or explicitly holds an epistemology based on its ontology.

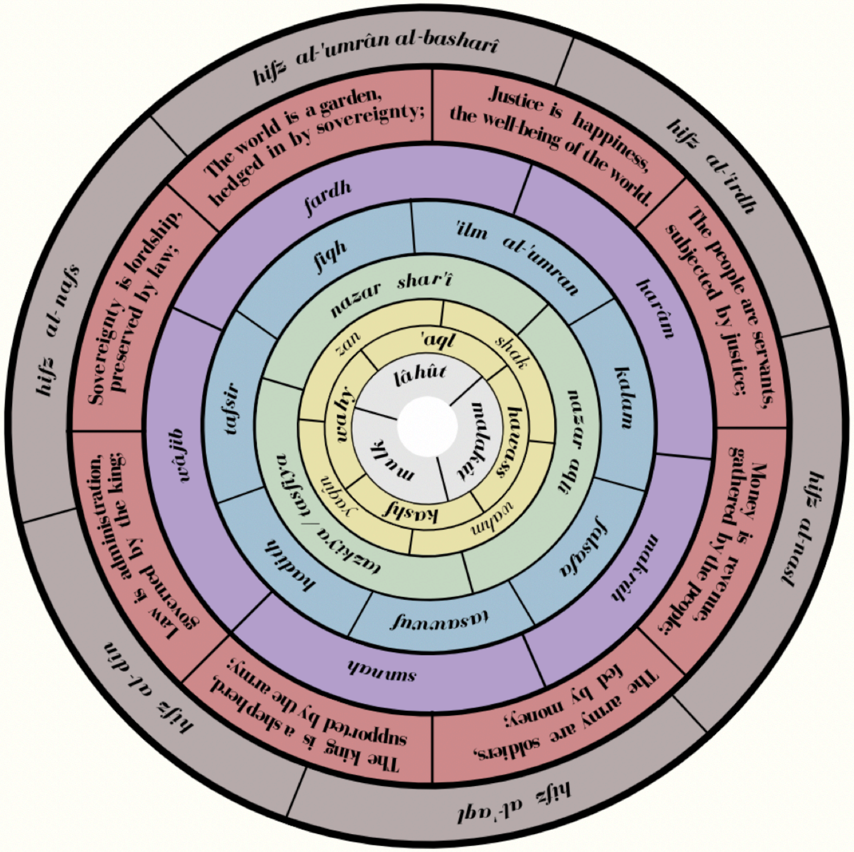
Being aware of the philosophical assumptions behind theories regarding reality, knowledge and approach, we can hope confidently that you can both choose between different existing theories and methods in consonance with your own attitude towards reality, and potentially build your own theory and method. And also, this book does not confine you to take a side either with materialism or idealism, positivism or interpretivism, but propounds another alternative research philosophy, namely the multiplex approach. After the study of this approach which is based on the awareness of a holistic ontology defending a multiplex understanding of reality based on a philosophy which is open to multiple views concerning reality you must have become aware of its multiplex epistemology as well. We claim that this approach does not lead to self-centric methods which are built on reductionist ontologies based on a uniplex conception of reality. Most theories predominantly used today are developed with Eurocentric approach and based on reductionist theories. We are practicing with this approach how to avoid this self-centric methods. As part of our practice we tried to discuss and evaluate positivist and idealist approaches. In a sense for the sake of simplicity we tried to reduce all theories into one of these approaches and try to understand what they defend. You are now supposed to check yourself and see if you can conceptualize the defending and opposing theories among these approaches. We ended with demonstrating application of a multiplex social theory as employed by Ibn Khaldūn as an alternative to the predominant social theories and methods.

Our aim is now to decide where to go from this point onwards to the applied multiplexity used in different disciplines. We will suggest to study further examples of multiplex approaches in different civilizations while concentrating on one civilization where multiplexity is fully developed in all areas. This civilization is Islamic civilization which is taken as a model to develop our method but as we are against self-centric approaches we aim to reach an abstract generalization to be applied in other social realities as well. Right at the beginning of Islamic civilization scholars, Muslims and non-Muslim, demonstrated an open attitude to all cultures based on the multiplex conception of reality and its corresponding epistemology. This brings us to observe that this is an open civilizational attitude. Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Birûnî (d. 1050) with his work on the anthropology of India, as well as many other early scholars and anthropologists, such as Abu'l-Fath Tâjuddîn Muhammad ibn 'Abdulkarîm al-Shahristânî (d. 1158) with his work *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal* on the history of science, are good examples of this approach.

Our journey into the depths of social theories will thus continue with similar scholars from Western civilization, Indian and Chinese civilizations. An exciting venture in our next volume into these world renown scholars and scientists we shall continue our investigation in various disciplines and try to understand their practice within their own perspectives. Applied multiplexity may serve as a new tool to better understand the questions, problems, and challenges humanity faces today.

Multiplexity

●	*Marâtib al-wujûd*	**Multiplex Ontology**
●	*Marâtib al-'ulûm*	**Multiplex Epistemology**
●	*Marâtib al-'usûl*	**Multiplex Methodology**
●	*Dâirat al-'ulûm*	**Circle of Disciplines**
●	*Marâtib al-ahkâm*	**Multiplex Norms**
●	*Dâirat al-siyâsa*	**Circle of Politics**
●	*Maqâsid al-shari'ah*	**Aims of Law**



lâhût
malakût
mulk
'aql
shak
hawass
wahm
kashf
yaqîn
wahy
zan
nazar shar'î
nazar aqli
tazkiya / tasfiya
'ilm al-'umran
kalam
falsafa
tasawwuf
hadith
tafsir
fiqh
fardh
harâm
makrûh
sunnah
wâjib
Justice is happiness, the well-being of the world.
The people are servants, subjected by justice;
Money is revenue, gathered by the people;
The army are soldiers, fed by money;
The king is a shepherd, supported by the army;
Law is administration, governed by the king;
Sovereignty is lordship, preserved by law;
The world is a garden, hedged in by sovereignty;
hifz al-'umrân al-basharî
hifz al-'irdh
hifz al-nasl
hifz al-'aql
hifz al-din
hifz al-nafs

GLOSSARY

***a posteriori* knowledge**:	knowledge derived from experience.
***a priori* knowledge:**	It is also called self-evident knowledge. It is knowledge that is independent of all particular experiences. It does not need any proof. A *priori* knowledge is called *badīhī* or *dharūrī* in Arabic.
al-'umrān al-badawī:	nomadic civilization or society
al-'umrān:	Ibn Khaldūn uses the terms *al-'umrān, madaniyyah*, *al-ijtima' al-bashari* and *al-ijtima' al-insani* to mean civilization, and according to Ibn Khaldūn, civilization denotes society. The opening chapter of the first book pertains to anthropic *ʿumrān* in general. Here prevail some premises (*muqaddemāt*), first of which is: It is of necessity for humans to live communally. *Hukamā* (philosophers) articulate this as such: **Humans are naturally predisposed to sociality**. That is, humans cherish an absolute need to society (*'ijtimā'*), which in their terminology corresponds to Madaniyyah, which in turn denotes *ʿumrān''* (Ibn Khaldūn cited in Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 526). The above excerpt illustrates Ibn Khaldūn's emphasis on conceiving the concepts of *ʿumrān*, *madaniyyah* and *'ijtimā'* as cognates.
al-'umrān:	Ibn Khaldūn uses the terms; al-'umrān, madanīyya, al-ijtimā' al-basharī and al-ijtimā' al-insanī to mean civilization, and according to Ibn Khaldūn, civilization is society.
al-umrān al-haḍārī:	sedentary civilization or society
alienation:	refers primarily to a type of exploitation that interferes with full, free human development. It also carries the meaning of "being deprived from positive liberty without being aware of it" (ex: a

	worker that supports capitalism, or a woman that supports patriarchy).
ambivalence and hybridity:	Homi Bhabha argued that viewing colonialism in terms of binaries (black–white; Western–Eastern) is simplistic and naïve. Cultures and identities are characterized by in-between moments, hybridity, ambivalence, and uncertainty. For Bhabha, hybridity is politically produced in the process of colonialism. It occupies an ambivalent space between the colonial power and its subjects.
aṣabiyyah:	social solidarity, referring to a peculiar type of motivation that ensures protection and makes possible a mutual form of defense and every other kind of social activity.
circle of justice*:*	an age-old comprehensive understanding of socio-political and socio-economical system. It was reshaped and reproduced according to the religious core of the Islamic civilization.
civilization:	is a social context in which Science emerges as a product of a long historical process.
communicative action:	citizens use language as a medium to elucidate practical and normative public issues (ex: should we choose solution X or Y?). Based on rationality, "language no longer serves merely to *transmit* and *actualize* prelinguistically guaranteed agreements, but more and more to bring about rationally motivated agreements as well" (Habermas 1985: 107). Habermas conceives communicative action as the ideal procedure to reach consensus in the public sphere.
deconstruction:	a form of philosophical and literary analysis to show how these texts work to present us with a particular vision of the world.

deductive approach:	moving from broad generalizations to specific observations.
deliberative democracy:	a regime based on domination-free communicative action. Citizens deliberate public issues by using rationality.
dependent variable:	a variable that is tested and measured in a scientific experiment.
dialectical materialism:	the theory that argues that economic structures of a particular society generate its cultural features such as ideas, art and institutions. Economic structures ("base") determine all other elements of social life ("superstructure"). The ideas and beliefs that people have in a class society reflect social institutions which are themselves the result of economic structures.
discourse:	refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, and statements that together produce a particular version of events.
double hermeneutic:	is a concept that draws attention to the production of meaning that takes place as a result of interaction between the two contexts (the context of the social scientist and the context of the research subject) within the research process.
emancipation:	denotes freedom "from oppressive conditions and constraining chains." It also refers to the movement from negative liberty to positive liberty (ex: from being a worker in capitalistic society to being a worker in a communist society; from being a woman in a patriarchal society to being a woman in a feminist society).
empiricism:	a philosophical tradition that sees experience as the basis for knowledge.

enlightenment:	in his essay "What is Enlightenment?," Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) defines the Enlightenment as "free-thinking," permitting individuals to reach universal philosophical and political principles by themselves. Through an unrestricted use of reason, individuals are able to establish a new social order based on justice, freedom, fraternity and knowledge.
essence *(jawhar):*	the essence of something is its basic and most important characteristic which gives it its individual identity.
explanation:	discovering causal relations behind natural and social phenomena.
Feminism:	The belief in gender equality in society, economy, and politics. While originating mainly in the Western academia, feminism is expressed globally and is represented by numerous organizations committed to activity on behalf of the rights and interests of women by varying and opposing approaches.
Feminist methodology:	It is a study strategy planned by feminist scientists in reaction to the concerns about the boundaries of traditional methodology in order to understand women's experiences and those marginalized in scholarly studies.
fiqh al-akbar **(greatest fiqh)**:	is the branch of *fiqh* that prepares the ontological and epistemological ground for *fiqh*. It is similar to theology and philosophy but uses different ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. It is commonly known as *aqāid*, *usūl al-din*, or *kalām*.
fiqh al-bātin **or** ***fiqh al-wijdāni*** **(inner *fiqh*)**:	is the discipline of *fiqh* that studies the inner aspect of human action. It is commonly known as *tasawwuf*.

fiqh:	the literal meaning of the word *fiqh* is 'deep understanding.' As a discipline, *fiqh* was developed by Muslims in order to analyze human behavior and action ('*amal*) in general, and human rights and responsibilities in particular. The most commonly known definition of *fiqh* is 'one's knowledge concerning one's rights and responsibilities that stem from one's actions.' This definition is attributed to Imam Abū Ḥanīfah, the founder of the Hanafi school of thought.
furū' al-fiqh:	is the social and normative science that deals with the external, observable, and objective aspects of behavior. The direct translation of the phrase *furū' al-fiqh* is 'branches of *fiqh*.'
fusion of horizons:	a concept developed by Gadamer to explain the process of understanding which for him is the collision of the horizons of the interpreter and the text.
geisteswissenschaften:	is the term used in the German intellectual tradition to refer to human sciences.
gender equality:	also known as sexual equality or gender equality, is the state of equal access to resources and possibilities irrespective of gender, including financial involvement and decision-making; and the state of equal appreciation of distinct behaviors, desires and needs regardless of gender.
gender:	From the 1950s, gender has been used to differentiate between biological sex and a distinctive social position (gender role) and/or gender identity. However, the emergence of gender as an analytical category within the feminist theory begins by the end of 1970s. By feminists, it refers the social organization of the relationship between sexes. Thus, the knowledge of the gender roles in society is acquired through experiences and performances and creates certain norms on

	femininity and masculinity which are socially constructed.
hermeneutic circle:	is the circular relationship between a part and a whole that emerges when one attempts to study an unfamiliar cultural product
historical materialism:	history is determined by the production relations (class relations) and the development of modes of production. Karl Marx (1818-1883) considers the confrontation between the dominant and subordinate classes as the engine of historical change.
humanities:	is a group of disciplines that concern themselves with human beings and their culture.
hypothesis:	a statement created by researchers when they speculate upon the outcome of a research or experiment. A hypothesis is a sentence that is comprised of a researcher's formulation and expectations and is meant to serve as an initial starting point when testing assumptions. an idea or explanation that you test by looking at specific instances.
hypothetical-deductive process:	the scientific process that starts from observation and proceeds to experimental methods and hypothesis testing.
idealism:	is a philosophical position in ontology according to which nature of reality or existence is incorporeal, immaterial, mental, mind-dependent or mentally constructed.
idiographic science:	an approach to science which presupposes that scientific knowledge comes through the evaluation of single events in their intrinsic complexity.

'ilm al-'umrān:	an independent discipline which was established by Ibn Khaldūn. *'Ilm al-'Umrān* has its own peculiar object, namely, human civilization and social organization.
incommensurability:	if two things are incommensurable, it means the two things cannot be be judged by the same standards; it arises when we cannot devise a common standard of measurement.
independent variable:	a variable that is controlled and changed in order to check its relationship with the dependent variable. In other words, the dependent variable is called *dependent* because it depends on the influence of the *independent* variable.
inductive approach:	moving from specific observations to broad generalizations.
Islamic Feminism:	Islamic feminism has emerged in the diaspora and has become common among Western converted societies. After the turn of the new century, Islamic feminism, which became increasingly visible in the 1990s, continues to develop. It is a worldwide phenomenon not confined to any geographic region but debated by several academic groups with an emphasis on the controversial arguments it brings.
***m'anā al-m'anā* or multiplex meaning:**	the view that language has at least two levels of meaning. The first meaning is the superficial meaning of the word, and the second is the symbolic and figurative meaning of the word.
majma' al-bahrayn:	the mingling of the two oceans, an expression used metaphorically by Taşköprüzade to describe the scholars who combine *nazar* and *tasfiyah* in their pursuit of knowledge.
marātib al-'ilm or	

multiplex epistemology:	multiplex scholars classify sources of knowledge into two categories, objective and subjective. Objective sources of knowledge include sense perception (*al-hawās al-salīma*), sound reason (*al-'aql al-salīm*), and revelation or reported knowledge (al-khabar al-sādiq). Subjective sources of knowledge include intuition, dreams, and inspiration or spiritual illumination (*kashf*).
***marātib al-wujūd* or multiplex ontology**:	a multilayered view of reality and existence. Levels of existence are called '*marātib al-wujūd*' in Arabic and are divided into at least three levels, namely the material level (*ālam al-mulk*), the non-material level (*ālam al-malakūt*), and the divine level (*ālam al-lahūt*).
materialism:	is a philosophical position in ontology according to which the ultimate nature of the reality is physical, or material, and mental life is understood as an emergent property arising from matter in complex combinations.
mulk:	royal authority.
naẓar:	theorizing, thinking, reasoning based on inference.
negative liberty:	the absence of apparent obstacles and constraints external to individuals.
nomothetic science:	an approach to science which presupposes that universally applicable scientific rules can be generated through the study and analysis of a large number of randomly selected cases.
objectivity:	a characteristic of scientific claims, methods and results. It expresses the idea that the claims, methods and results of science are not, or should not be influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions.
operational definition:	this is one of the key terms in positivist research. In order to conduct research we need to define all the

	concepts and variables clearly. This type of definition is referred to as an operational definition.
orientalism:	Edward Said claimed that the Orient was produced and managed by European countries in a way that reflected their political, social, economic, military, ideological, and scientific power. Orientalism, therefore, places the West in a position of superiority over the Orient.
paradigm:	a set of beliefs that takes a stand on ontology, epistemology, and methodology that guides research or inquiry.
patriarchy:	Patriarchy is a social system where males hold main power and predominate in political management positions, moral authority control of the property, and social privilege.
positive liberty:	the possibility for individuals to self-determine their destiny and to design their own ideals and moral principles from rational thinking.
praxis:	social scientists are not conceived as "neutral observers" but as "agents of change." By meddling with political conflicts from the side of the oppressed (whether workers, women or colonized people), social scientists experience the real mechanisms lying behind apparent social phenomena and attempt to change the existing social order.
properties *(awāriḍ):*	qualities, attributes or distinctive features of a thing.
qualitative research:	one of two major approaches to collecting and analyzing data. It is used to understand concepts, thoughts or experiences. It uses methods such as interviews, focus groups, case studies, discourse analysis.
quantitative research:	one of two major approaches to collecting and analyzing data. It is used to test or confirm theories

	and hypotheses. It uses methods such as surveys, experimental research, observational research.
rationalism:	a philosophical tradition that bases knowledge on the human capacity for reason.
rationality:	refers firstly to a cognitive faculty (explaining phenomena with reason-based thinking), and secondly to a moral virtue (being "mature enough" to think independently without the need of exterior references outside of reason).
real democracy:	a regime that guarantees the application of positive liberty (ex: republic regime insists on citizens' participation in collective deliberation).
reified democracy:	a regime that only guarantees negative liberty. Citizens are only equal before the law, not in practice (ex: liberal democracy insists on a non-intrusive constitutional state).
reliability:	refers to the consistency of a measure. It ensures the reliability of the instrument that is being used for measurement.
riyāsah:	leadership, or more specifically, a chieftain who is obeyed but has no power to force others to accept his rule.
scientific and methodological anarchism:	"Against the belief in only one system or a "rational" standard of justification, Paul Feyerabend defends methodological anarchism, which holds that there are alternative systems within which coherence can still be established. Feyerabend, in his objection and rejection of universal standard on method, holds that there are many systems and (even within science itself), each with its own standards of justification and as such, it is not possible to choose between them "rationally", for they are incommensurable. So, in the place of the

	”rationality” of universal scientific and technological method, he talks of methodological plurality, or what he terms “Epistemological (Scientific) Anarchism” (Anowai & Okafor 2018: 506).
scientific method:	is to generate testable hypotheses in order to predict future outcomes and the ability to falsify these hypotheses.
sexism:	Sexism, sexual or gender-based bias or discrimination, particularly against females. Although its origin is uncertain, the word sexism arose through the 1980s from the ‘second-wave’ feminism of the 1960s and was most probably based on the word racism (prejudice or race-based discrimination) of the civil rights movement.
shaykh al-Islām:	*mufti* of Istanbul and head of the *ulama* in the Ottoman Empire.
social action:	is the subject matter of social sciences. Social action is a type of action which takes into consideration the existence of other people.
social sciences:	are a group of disciplines that study social actions and relations between individuals, groups, and institutions for the purpose of exploring the reasons behind them.
societal science:	is an umbrella term referring to the study of society and social phenomena in every civilization.
standpoint:	social scientists who want to describe ”real” mechanisms of the society should take the standpoint of the colonized/subaltern. Indeed, only the colonized/subaltern physically and mentally experiences the material and cultural oppression of the Western colonial system. In other words, social scientists must adopt the standpoint of lower classes (proletariat) in order to interpret the world from this side of the dialectical materialism. The word standpoint involves a certain worldview and

	position which gives you all the knowledge through experience. It is a duality of reality and shows the deep-level "surface." It also means the logic that misinterprets the greater truth and transposes it (Harding, 1987, p. 285).
subjectivity:	being based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions.
tasfiyah:	(also called *tazkiyat al-naf*s) the process of purifying the self from impurities and adorning it with virtues.
text:	anything that can be ‘read’ for meaning which is a manifestation of a discourse. No aspect of human life is without meaning (life as text). The excerpt illustrates Ibn Khaldūn’s emphasis towards construing *ʿumrān*, *madanīyya* and ‘*ijtimā’* as cognates. The opening chapter of the first book pertains to anthropic *ʿumrān* in general. Here prevail some premises (*muqaddemāt*), first of which is: It is of necessity for humans to live communally. Hukemā (philosophers) articulate this as such: Humans are naturally predisposed to sociality. That is, humans cherish an absolute need to society (‘*ijtimā‘*), which in their terminology corresponds to *madaniyyah*, which in turn denotes *ʿumrān''* (Ibn Khaldūn cited in Şentürk-Nizamuddin 2008: 526).
the subaltern:	Shakravorty Spivak employed the concept of the subaltern to describe the situation of Third World women. She argues that any attempt by Western scholars to represent or articulate subaltern experience is problematic because it runs the risk of speaking on behalf of the people being studied.
usūl al-fiqh: **(methodology of *fiqh*)**:	is the discipline of *fiqh* that consists of the common methodology of all Islamic disciplines.

validity:	the extent to which the scores from a measure represent the variable they are intended to.
value-freedom:	Weber believes that the inquirer should be objective, and to be objective, they must try to be value-neutral. This is what Weber calls value-freedom.
value-relevance:	is to select the objects of study and to make results out of research data in relation to values.
verstehen*:*	a German term associated with Max Weber meaning empathic understanding of human behaviour, or understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view. It implies an interpretive or participatory examination of social phenomena.
worldview:	the prerequisite to have science in a society is the existence of a **worldview** that is appropriate for the scientific activities. This worldview leads to knowledge accumulation and forms a suitable environment for a scientific tradition to emerge.

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